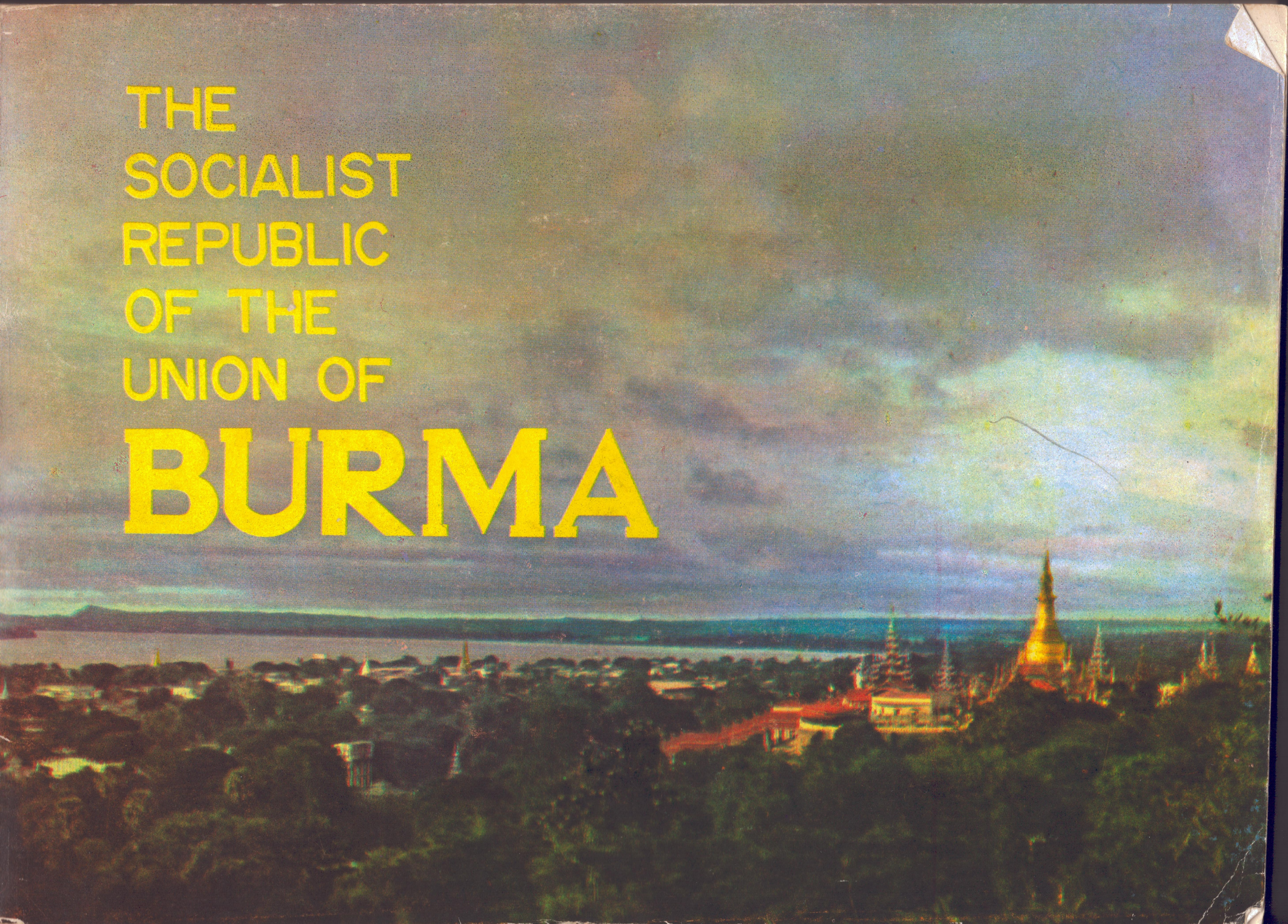
THE
SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC
OF THE
UNION OF
BURMA



THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

OF

THE UNION OF BURMA

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THE UNION OF BURMA

THE LAND

The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma lies in South-east Asia between latitudes 10°N and 28°N and longitudes 92°E and 101°E. The country is roughly in the form of a diamond 920 km. across from east to west and 1450 km. from north to south. The Tenasserim coastal strip extends from the south-eastern side of the diamond some 690 km. further south into the Malay peninsula.

The country is bordered by Bangladesh and India on the north-west, China on the north-east, Laos and Thailand on the south-east and the Bay of Bengal on the south and west.

The mountain ranges on the west, north and east serve as natural barriers. The Arakan Yoma separates the Irrawaddy River valley from the sea, the Pegu Yoma separates the Irrawaddy and Sittang river valleys while the Shan escarpment rises to the east of the Sittang River. The Tenasserim Yoma runs down the coastal strip of the same name. The highest peak Khakabo-razi is in the far north and is 5788.8 meters high. The famous extinct volcano, Mt. Popa, is in central Burma at the northern end of the Pegu Yoma and is 1350 meters high.

The 1800 km. long Irrawaddy River is formed by the confluence of two rivers, N'mai Kha and Mali Kha, some 440 km. north of Mandalay. The river which is more than one kilometer and a half wide at many places is navigable from its mouth to Bhamo, 1450 km. upcountry. Before the river enters the Andaman Sea it divides into eight main branches which form the sprawling, fertile delta covering an area of 33670 square kilometers.

The Chindwin River is the main tributary of the Irrawaddy and rises in the north-western hills. It flows through 800 km. of navigable reaches till it flows into the Irrawaddy near Pakokku, 200 km. north of Pagan.

The Sittang River rises in the hills south-east of Mandalay and flows parallel to the Pegu Yoma until it empties into the Gulf of Martaban, an extension of the Andaman Sea. Its wide estuary is noted for its tidal bore.

The Salween River races through deep gorges cut deep into the Shan Plateau. It is locally navigable but is too swift to permit navigation for any extended length. It flows into the Gulf of Martaban.

There are inland lakes. The largest is the highland Inle Lake near Taunggyi on the Shan plateau. It is famous for its floating islands and leg-rowers. The Indawgyi Lake, 115 square kilometers in area, is in northern Burma, between the Irrawaddy and Chindwin Rivers.

Most of Burma lies within the tropics, the Tropic of Cancer passing through the country about a hundred and fifty kilometers north of Mandalay. There are three seasons: the wet, the cold and the dry.

The wet season is from mid-May to October end. During this period the south-west monsoon brings rain from the Bay of Bengal. The coastal regions receive about 500 centimeters of rain, the Irrawaddy delta about 250 centimeters and the hilly regions about 200. Central Burma which lies within the rain shadow of the Arakan Yoma receives about 50 to 75 centimeters of rain.

The cold season is from early November to late February when temperatures in the south of the country may drop to 15.5°C. In other areas the cold is more intense.

The hot season comes before the rains. Temperatures in the south are around 37.75°C but those in the central plain may be as high as 43°C.

The country has many varieties of rich forests. Durian, jackfruit and magosteen grow in the rain forests. Rubber too grows there. World famous Burma teak is cultivated in the deciduous monsoon forests. It is found in association with such other commercially important hardwoods as pyinkado, padauk, in, ingyin and kanyin. The dry forests also contain commercially important timbers as well as forest products. The sub-tropical forests contain oaks, chestnuts, alders and cherries. Acer, birch and hornbeam grow in the temperate forests while juniper, Silver fir, pine and larch are common in the alpine forests.

There is an abundance of exotic flowers: gold mohur, jacaranda, flame of the forest, laburnum, ironwood, frangipani, bauhenia, largerstromia. One of the most beautiful indigenous flowering trees is the thawkagyi (Amherstia nobilis). Rhododendrons are abundant too and over five hundred species of orchids may be found. Even roadside trees are clustered with orchids.

Bamboo, cane and palm are abundant and beautiful and are of much use to the economy.

The elephant is still used in the extraction of timber. Burma is one of the countries which still has the rhinoceros. Another rare animal is the takin. The goral, musk deer and snow leaopard are found in the north.

There are also Burmese bison or gaur, banteng, mythum, serow and such members of the deer family as brown antlered deer, sambur, hog deer and barking deer. The carnivores include the tiger, leopard, clouded leopard, leopard cat and many species of cat, civet, binturong. Wild pig is abundant, as are monkeys. There are 12 game sanctuaries with a total area of 26000 square kilometers.

The country is also rich in birds including the brilliant peafowl and many rare species of pheasant. The big hamadryads or king cobras are native to the country and there are many pythons. The rivers teem with tasty fish. Many valuable sea fish are found in Burmese waters. Oysters are plentiful and they produce some of the world's loveliest pearls.

The dugong, a rare aquatic animal, is found in the Arakan coastal waters while the rare Irrawaddy porpoise is a denizen of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin river waters.

THE PEOPLE

The people of Burma are of Mongoloid stock and derive from three main branches: Tibeto-Burman, Mon-Khmer and Tai-Chinese.

The Tibeto-Burman group includes the Burmese and Proto-Burmese, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Chin and Lolo.

The Burmese and Proto-Burmese include the Burmese, Zi, Lashi, Maru, Hpon, Danu, Taungyo, Intha, Yaw, Chaungtha, Arakanese, Tavoyan, Merguian, Anauktha, Myauktha and Zabein.

The Mon-Khmer includes Mon, Palaung, Wa, La, Riang.

The Tai-Chinese include Shan, Hkun, Lu, Lao, Shan-Tayoke, Shan-Burma, Kokang.

It is impossible to mention more than a few of the races, for Burma is an anthropologists' paradise.

ITS HISTORY

Burmese chronicles draw the lineage of Burmese kings from Tagaung, 150 kilometers up river from Mandalay. It flourished in the 5th century B.C. In the 1st century B.C. a civilization flourished in the Irrawaddy River valley all the way down from Tagaung to Prome. This was the Pyu civilization which reached a high level of economic, social and cultural development.

In the 11th century A.D., King Anawrahta (1044-77) welded the many principalities into the one Kingdom of Pagan. Through his initiative and influence Theravada Buddhism spread throughout the country. The Pagan dynasty ended when the capital city was sacked by the Tartars in the 13th century. King Tabinshwehti (1531-1550) reunited the country. The Konbaung Dynasty, the last, was established by Alaungpaya in 1752. The dynasty was ended when the British annexed Burma to British India in 1886.

The annexation failed to dispirit the Burmese. Such ethnic groups as the Burmese, Kachin, Chin and Shan continued to resist the British till the second decade of this century. A dyarchy system was introduced in 1920 but this did not please the Burmese who wanted independence. Saya San led a rebellion in 1930 but it was repressed. Burma became a separate political unit from India in April 1937. But these political concessions agains fell short of Burmese objectives.

Burmese uncompromising desire for independence became manifest in a nation-wide movement at the beginning of World War II. Thakin Aung San and 29 other youths managed to slip out of the country. After a period of military training, they accompanied the Japanese Army into Burma at the head of a Burma Independence Army. In August 1943, an "Independence" for Burma was proclaimed by the Japanese but it was not the real thing. Open resistance broke out when the Burmese Defence Army and the Anti-Fascist Organisation struck against the Japanese throughout the country on March 27, 1945.

The British returned and set up their own administration which was resisted by the Burmese. The British compromised by setting up a Governor's Executive Council with Bogyoke (Thakin) Aung San as the Deputy Chairman. In January, 1947, Bogyoke Aung San led a Burmese delegation to the United Kingdom which resulted in the signing of the Aung San-Atlee Agreement on "methods by which the people of Burma may achieve their independence either within or without the Commonwealth as soon as possible." On February 12, 1947 at the conference of all Burmese nationalities held at Panglong in the Shan State, the representatives of Kachin, Kayah, Chin, Shan and other races spoke with one voice in opting for a merger of their areas with Burma Proper in a single state. On January 4, 1948, Burma became independent outside the Commonwealth.

The country however remained unsettled and various rebellions broke out under different leaders with different objectives. The insurgents reached a point 20 km. from the capital but the Burmese Government and the Armed Forces under General Ne Win repulsed the insurgents and regained control of the major areas of the country. But division broke out within the ranks of the ruling Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League and in 1958, General Ne Win was requested by the Prime Minister to take over the administration in order to restore public order and prepare for a general election. The general election was duly and fairly held but divisive elements again rose, threatening the structure of the whole Union.

On March 2, 1962, the Revolutionary Council under General Ne Win assumed state power. The Burmese Way to Socialism was declared on April 30, 1962 and the Burma Socialist Programme Party was established.

The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma was promulgated on January 3, 1974. On March 2, 1974, The Pyithu Hluttaw, the People's Assembly of 450 elected representatives, elected a Council of State with U Ne Win as Chairman. The Chairman of the Council of State is also the President of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma.

THE CONSTITUTION

The Pyithu Hluttaw is the Highest Organ of state power. It elects the Council of State. It may delegate executive and judicial powers of the State to Central and Local organs of State Power.

The Council of State is composed of 29 members. Fourteen represent the fourteen states and divisional territorial units while fourteen represent the Pyithu Hluttaw as a whole. The Prime Minister is the twenty-ninth member.

The Council of Ministers is the highest executive organ of the State. The Council of People's Justices is the highest Judicial organ of the State. The Council of People's Attorneys protects and safeguards the Socialist system as well as the rights and privileges of the working people. The Council of People's Inspectors is the highest organ of inspection of public undertakings.

The People's Councils at state, division, township, ward and village-tract level are the Local Organs of State Power.

All citizens are equal before the law, regardless of race, religion, status or sex. They enjoy equal opportunities. They enjoy the benefits derived from their labour in proportion to their contribution in manual or mental labour. They have the right to inherit according to law. They can undertake any vocation permitted by the State within the framework of the Socialist economy and can settle and reside in any place within the State according to the law.

All citizens have the right to freedom of thought, and of conscience, and to freely profess any religion. All citizens have the right to freedom of speech, expression and publication to the extent that the enjoyment of such freedom is not contrary to the interests of the working people and of socialism. The personal freedom and security of every citizen is guaranteed. Women enjoy equal political, economic, social and cultural rights as men.

Every citizen has the duty in the exercise of his rights and freedom to abstain from undermining the sovereignty and security of the State, of the essence of the socialist system prescribed by the Constitution, of the unity and solidarity of the national races, of public peace and tranquility and of public morality.

THE ECONOMY

Burma had a population of 33.31 million in 1979 with an annual growth rate of 2.27 per cent. The crude birth rate was 26.8 per thousand while the crude death rate was 10.2 per thousand.

Burma is an agricultural economy in the process of modernisation and appropriate industrialisation. Rice and timber are the main products but beans and pulses, jute, fish, minerals and petroleum are growing in importance.

The area under crops was 9.54 million hectares; multiple cropping took place on 1.5 million hectares. Irrigated area was 0.97 hectares. Rice was grown on 4.96 million hectares and 10.3 million metric tons were produced. Groundnut and sessamum were grown on 0.6 and 1.04 million hectares respectively while 0.5 and 0.12 million metric tons were produced respectively. Pulses were grown on 0.76 million hectares while cotton was grown on 0.2 million hectares. (All these and following figures are for the period 1979-1980).

There were 8.26 million cattle and 1.82 million buffaloes. State hatcheries distributed 4.5 million fingerlings. Freshwater and seafish produced was 585,000 metric tons.

There are 99,435 square kilometres of reserved forest. Teak produced was 400,250 cubic tons while over 1 million cubic tons of hardwood was produced.

Over 30,000 barrels of oil a day was produced to give an annual production of 11.7 million barrels. Coal produced was 37.4 million metric tons. The production of lead, tin and tungsten was 5,115, 1,350 and 560 tons respectively.

The production in metric tons of sugar, salt, cement and fertilisers was 35425, 258800, 365000 and 130000 respectively. Over 1034 million kilowatt hours of electricity was generated.

There are 22370 kilometers of highway and 4328 kilometers of railway. There are 1.1 telephones per thousand persons.

The value of exports was K 2651 million and the value of imports was K 4560 million.

Over 22,000 tourists spent K 1,680 each.

Out of over 5 million students, 143000 were studying higher education. Over 22000 academic and professional graduates are produced annually.

There are 7.12 beds per 10000 population. 2.85 doctors, 1.30 nurses and 9.15 midwives.

Rangoon has six newspapers, four of which are in Burmese and two in English. The Burma Broadcasting Service broadcasts for sixteen and one-half hours a day in Burmese, English and the languages of the national ethnic groups. There are telecasts for two hours in the evening with extended telecast time on weekends. Some 70 motion pictures are produced every year. Foreign films in English and Indian languages are also screened.

Beach at Ngapali.

Arakan State

Arakan State is a long narrow coastal region cut off from the rest of Burma by the Arakan Yoma. On the north it is bounded by Bangladesh, on the northeast by Chin State, on the east by Magwe, Pegu and Irrawaddy Divisions, on the south by Irrawaddy Division and on the west by the Bay of Bengal. The Naaf River forms the boundary between Bangladesh and Arakan State.

It has an area of 36778 sq. km. The distance from Bangladesh-Arakan border to Arakan-Bassein Division border is about 144 km. at its widest. There are 17 townships and 11,041 village tracts in Arakan State. The population in 1980 is 1.9 million. Population density is the highest in Akyab township, and lowest in An township.

Most of the people are Arakanese; there are also Chins who generally occupy the hill areas of Myebon, Ramree, An and Taungup townships. The Taungthas, who are related to the Chins, usually inhabit the hilly regions in the north. Kwamwees live in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U area. Other nationals found interspersed with Arakanese in the region are Anoo, Burman, Daingnet, Kaman, Khaungsoe Linke, Marama-gyi, Mro, Shandoo, and Thet.

Physical Background

Arakan State lies between the Arakan Yoma and the Bay of Bengal. The Yoma come very close to the coast. The whole region is hilly and the coast is rocky and fringed with islands which are, in fact, tops of submerged mountains. The larger and more important islands are Ramree, Cheduba (Man-aung) and Baronga, all in the northern section. The coastal plain is usually narrow and not continuous as the hills reach right down to the edge of the coast in many places.

The mountains in the north are May, Saingtin, Mingyi, Wet-the-toe and Koe-lun. Those in the south are Myin-kha-tee, Moe-hti, Khar-taung-nge, Yan-kaw, Pan-taung, Sa-par-pone and Kun-chaung. The rivers of Arakan, with the exception of those in Akyab township, are small mountain streams. The rivers Naaf, Mayu, Kaledan and Lemro are all in Akyab township. The Saingtin, a tributary of the Mayu is noted for its waterfall, which has good prospects for development of hydro-electric power.

The only sizable plain is the Akyab plain. This plain is formed by the deltas of Mayu, Kaledan and Lemro rivers. It is fertile and serves as the major rice producing area of Arakan. Akyab, the capital of the Arakan State is situated in this plain. It is also the site of the capitals of old Arakanese Kingdoms.

The Arakan coast, though generally rocky, has some lovely beaches. One such beach is the Ngapali, close to Sandoway. The hills coming down close to the beach enhance the beauty of the beach. The water around Ngapali is very clear. It is quite natural that it has now become Burma's leading seaside resort. A Luyechun (outstanding students) camp known as the Shwewagyaing, is located at Ngapali.

The average temperature is about 28.9° C during hottest month and about 21.0° C in the cold season. The whole region is backed up by mountain ranges, and as it lies directly in the path of the rainbearing southwest monsoons, rainfall is heavy. On the averages Akyab receives about 515.6 cm. Kyaukpyu 487.7 cm. and Sandoway 543.6 cm. of rain. Storms originating in the Andaman seas and Bay of Bengal generally move towards the Arakan coast in April and May (pre-monsoon period). The Kyaukpyu storm of 1967 and the Akyab-Kyaukpyu storm of 1968 occurred on May 17 and May 10 respectively. Occasionally, storms may also visit the Arakan coast in October and November. Due to heavy rainfall and high temperatures most of the region is covered with tropical rainforests. There are 136073 sq. km. of reserved forest in the Arakan State.

Economy

Rice is clearly the most important crop and is found mostly in the Akyab plain. Coconut palms are found all along the coast, and nipa palms along the banks of streams. Other crops found here include groundnut, onions, chillies, tobacco, bananas, sugar cane, maize, and areca nuts. Jute is also grown in Akyab township.

Fishing in Arakan is now being encouraged by the government. Fishing stations have been established in Akyab, Kyaukpyu and Sandoway. There are plans to set up pearl fisheries on an experimental scale. Boiling of salt is done by most people living on the coasts, often to have some additional income besides that from agriculture. There is a big saltern in Kyaukpyu and another one in Akyab township. Salt from Akyab is sun-dried.

Arakan State has rice mills, saw mills and marble factories. Marble from Nay-pu-taung 40 km. from Taungup, is noted in the making of marble statuettes, household utensils and floor tiles. There are also many small factories producing ice, sugar, paper, soap and matches. Arakanese textiles, both cotton and silk, are famous in Burma.

Lemro Chaung and Kyain Chaung are now being utilized for hydro-electric power development. Offshore exploration for oil in Mozi has yet to show some results.

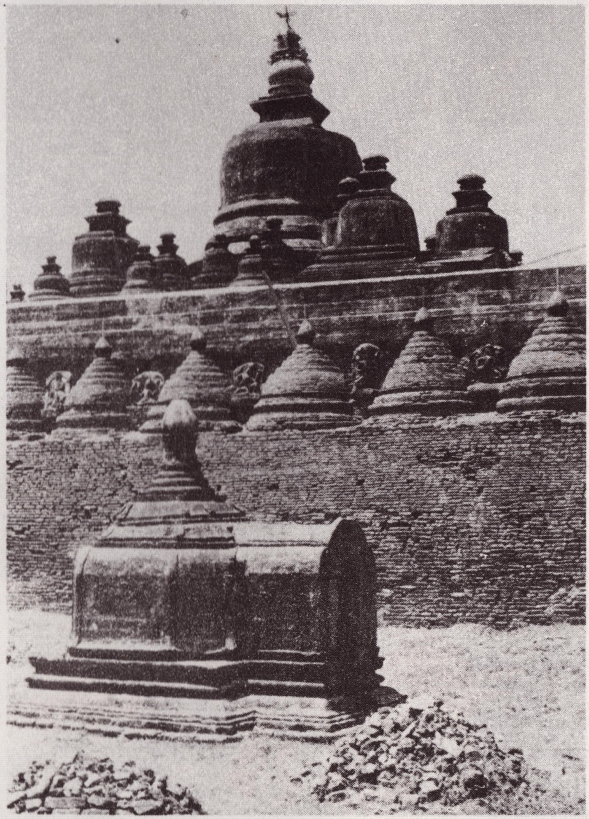
Arakan State is poorly served by roads and railways. The country is rugged and cut up by small streams. Construction of roads and railways is very difficult and expensive as it involves building of bridges across numerous streams. The Arakan State still has no railways, and very few roads. The only important roads are: Buthitaung-Maungdaw road in the north 35.5 km., Ramree-Kyaukpyu road 80 km. and Taungup Sandoway-Gwa road 205 km. There is also a branch from Sandoway to Mayo Bay 43 km.

The Arakan Yoma also forms an effective barrier between Arakan and the Central Basin. There are, however, three passes linking the two regions. The An pass links Minbu area (Central Burma) with An on the Arakan side and the Taungup pass links Padaung (opposite Prome) with Taungup and Sandoway on the Arakan side. The Gwa pass, farther south, links Henzada (delta region) with Gwa, on the Arakan coast.

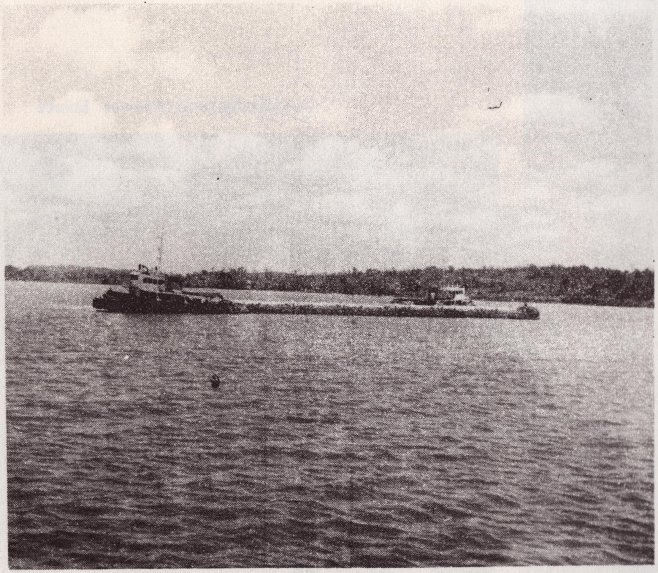
The waterways form the chief means of communication in this long coastal region. Government steamboats ply from Akyab to Buthidaung, Paletwa, Mrauk-U, Pan-Myaing, Man-aung and Sandoway. There are also private motorboats plying along the coast and along streams. Akyab, Kyaukpyu and Sandoway also have air connections with Rangoon.

Akyab, Kyaukpyu, Sandoway, Ramree, Mrauk-U and Maungdaw are some of the more important towns of the Arakan State. The first three are the leading seaports of the Arakan State. Recently, modern LASH (Lighter Aboard Ship) freighters have called at Kyaukpyu port. Sandoway, in addition to being a seaport, is also a famous resort. Ramree and Mrauk-U are sites of old Arakanese kingdoms. Maungdaw, situated at the mouth of the Naaf river, is an important commercial centre and a frontier town.

The ancient pagodas at Mrauk-U



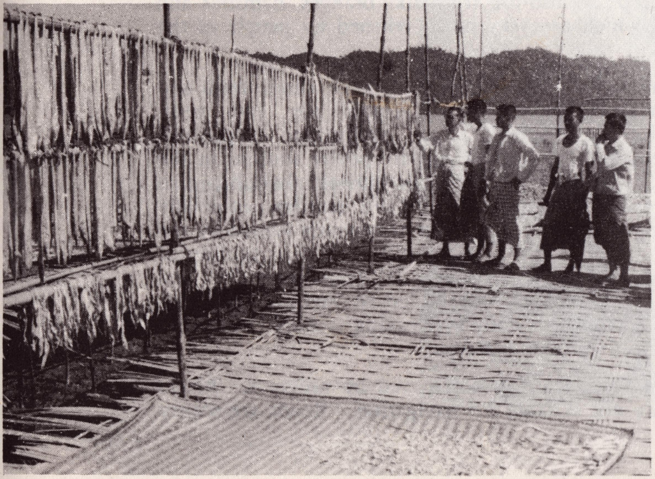
Kyaukpyu Port



Candle and Flower Dance

Taungup-pass through the Arakan Yoma

Dry fish industry



Chin State

It is bounded on the north and east by Sagaing Division, on the south by Magwe Division and Arakan State and on the west by Bangladesh and India. It has an area 36020 square kilometres. There are nine townships and 476 village tracts in the Chin State. It has a population of 349500 in 1980. The Chin belong to the Tibeto-Burman branch of Mongoloid stock. The principal ethnic groups are Lai, Simbhrin, Kumi, Cho, Siyin and Matu.

Physical Background

The whole region is made up of high hills, largely dissected by deep valleys. There is hardly any plain or plateau. The heights of the hills vary between 1500 m. and 2700 m. The highest peak in the Chin Hills is Mt. Victoria, 3120 m. and the next is Mt. Kennedy. The Manipur and the Kaladan are the important rivers of this region. The Manipur river rises in Manipur in India. The Kaladan flows through the Chin Hills and enters the Bay of Bengal after passing through the Arakan State. The Yaw, Salin and Mann streams all take their source in the Chin Hills and enter the Irrawaddy river.

Between the altitudes of 900 m. and 1500 m. the climate is temperate. At Tiddim, the average summer temperature is 20.5° C. and the average winter temperature is 13.3° C. The rainy season is from June to November, just like the rest of Burma, but pre-monsoon storms are quite common. The amount of rainfall varies from place to place, with a general decrease towards the interior. Haka receives about 230 cm. to 255 cm., Falam about 130 cm. to 150 cm. and Tiddim about 100 cm. to 130 cm.

There are 1435 square kilometres of reserved forests and 34509 square kilometres of unreserved forests. Teak and other hardwoods are found at a height of 900 m. Above these are oaks, and then pines, which are found at their best at an altitude of about 1500 m. The pine found here is *pinus khasya*, which is the best resin-producing tree in the world.

Economy

The chief occupation is agriculture, but agriculture here is not well developed due to scarcity of large valleys and plains. Shifting cultivation is still prevalent but terrace cultivation of the hillsides is slowly and surely expanding at its expense. Draught animals are rarely used due to difficult terrain and agriculture is entirely dependent on human labour. Irrigation of fields has now been introduced and rice, wheat and maize are grown. Coffee is an important cash crop ; so also are fruits like oranges, damsons and apples which are very much relished by people of the plains.

Among forest products, teak, pines, canes, resin and turpentine are important. There are two resin factories and pilot plant producing turpentine. Altogether, there are five electric power stations in the Chin State. One hydroelectric power plant has also been established at Falam. Chin textiles, especially blankets and Yaw longyis, are very much valued by the plains people. The Chins still use the traditional method of weaving which is time-consuming and involves a lot of labour. Modern methods are now being introduced and a weaving school has been established for this purpose.

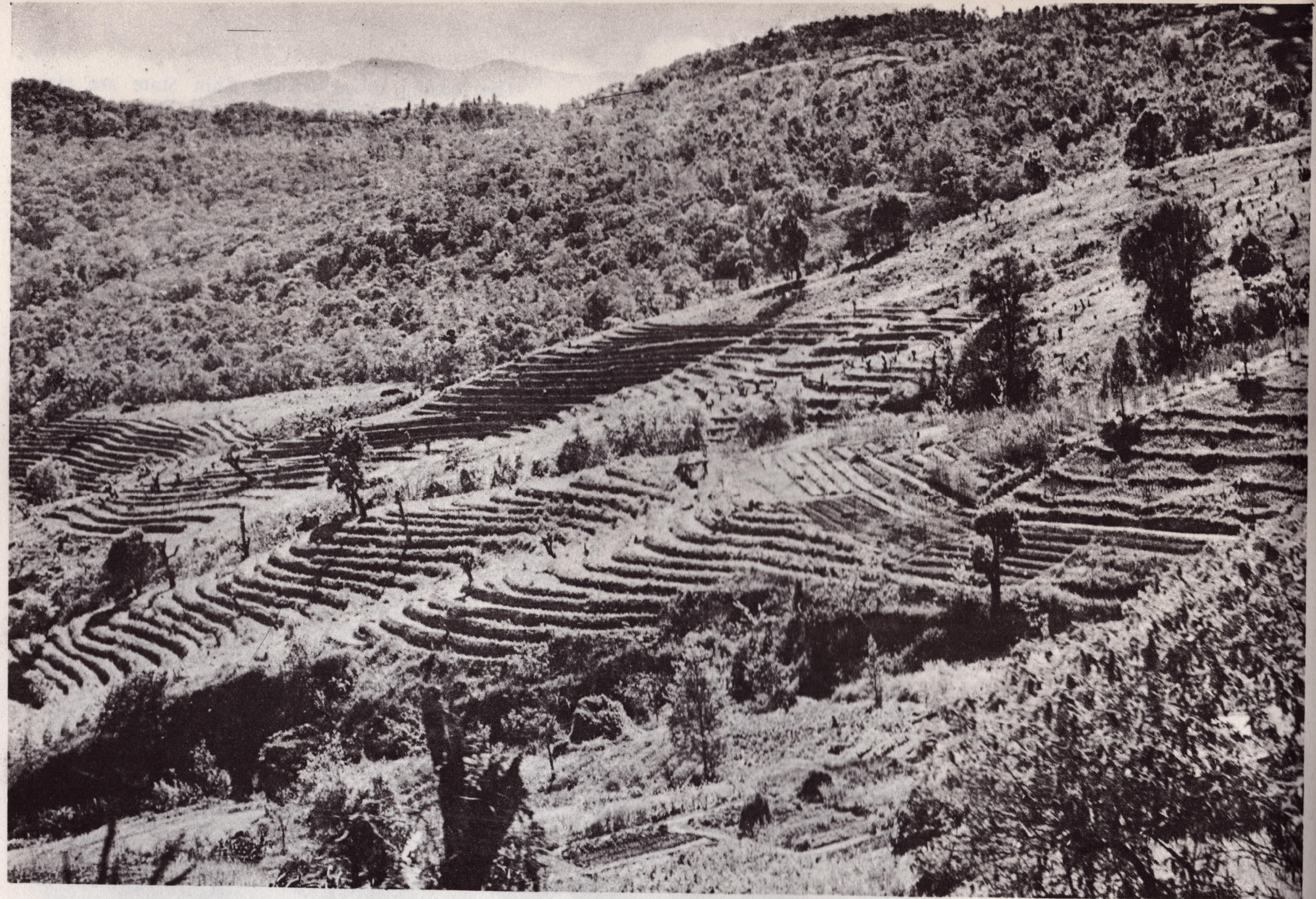
The Chin State is not served by railways. Rivers here are not suitable for navigation. Roads are scanty and poor due to the very rugged nature of the country. It is difficult to maintain roads in the Chin hills due to heavy rainfalls which often lead to landslides. The Chins are natural, good mountaineers and they travel mostly on foot. The most important roads of the Chin State are the road from Kalewa to Falam and Haka; the road from Kalewa through Fort White to Tiddim; and the road from Haka to Matupi. There is also another road from Seikpyu, on the bank of the Irrawaddy to Mindat: this road passes through Saw and Kyaukhtu.

The leading towns of the Chin State are Haka, Falam, Tiddim and Paletwa. Haka is the capital of the Chin State. It is much more centrally placed than the old capital, Falam.

Falam is situated on a spur above the Manipur river, 1 590 m. above sea level.

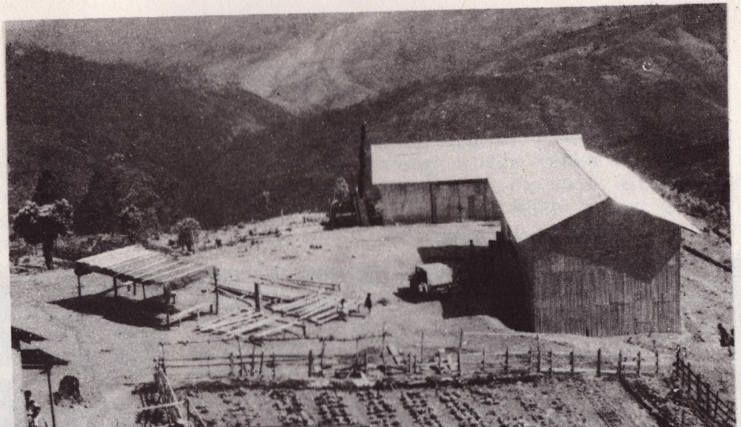
Paletwa lies in the southern part, in the region formerly known as the Arakan Hill District. It lies on the west bank of the Kaladan river, high above the stream, in a narrow gorge and is the head of navigation of the Kaladan river.

Girls of the Chin hills.



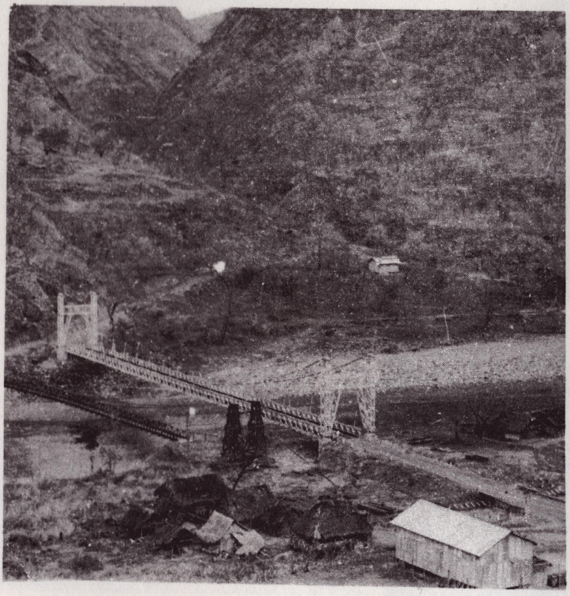
Terrace cultivation

Turpentine factory



Chin folk dance

Manipur river bridge



Harvesting oranges

Kachin State

Kachin State is the northernmost State of Burma. It has common international boundaries with India, the Peoples' Republic of China, Shan State and Sagaing Division in Burma. It has an area of 89040 square kilometres. There are eighteen townships: within these townships are 614 village tracts. The total population is 813,600 in 1980. Most of the people are Kachins (Atsi, Jingphaw, Lashi, Lisu, Lawngwaw and Rawang). There are also Shans.

Physical Background

Kachin State occupies the northern mountain zone and is therefore mountainous throughout, with the exception of river valleys. The general height of mountains ranges from 900 m. to over 2700 m. with peaks usually rising above 3300 m. Burma's highest peak, Khakaborazi, 5793.6 m. lies in the far north (28° 18′ N, 97° 32′ E). Burma's largest lake, the Indawgyi, is also in this region. It is 25.6 km. long and 9.6 km. wide, at its widest. This is a lake of tectonic origin and is believed to have been formed by an earthquake which submerged a Shan village.

Burma's most important river, the Irrawaddy, also flows through this region. The Irrawaddy is formed by the meeting of two mountain streams, the N'mai Hka and the Mali Hka, 46.5 km. north of Myitkyina. The confluence of these two streams is one of the pleasant sights of Kachin State. Both the streams are swift, with clean, clear water. Where the streams meet, the stream beds are rocky and the banks are strewn with rocks of all sizes and colours. The mountain sides along the river bank are covered with rich, green forests.

After emerging from the hills the Irrawaddy flows southwards through rocky defiles and fairly broad plains. The defiles of the Irrawaddy are also noted for their scenery. The first defile is near Sinbo, above Bhamo; the second between Bhamo and Katha and the third defile is near Thabeik-kyin. The first two defiles are in Kachin State. The third is in Mandalay Division. In the first defile the gorge narrows to 50 m. at its upper end. The gorge of the second defile is only a few kilometres long but quite imposing. One of the cliffs towers up to a magnificent height of 2400 m. above the river.

There are some lowlands which are partly surrounded by mountains, the most significant of these are the Putao and Bhamo plains and the Hukawng valley.

The climate in Kachin State is considerably different from that of the rest of Burma due largely to its northerly and interior location and also to its altitude. It is fairly cold in winter and quite hot in summer. For both Bhamo and Myitkyina, the average temperature is about 15.5° C. for January and 26.6° C. for July. Above 2700 m. the temperature falls to freezing point. Rainfall is fairly heavy. The average annual rainfall for Shwegu is 157.5 cm., for Bhamo 185.5 cm., for Mogaung and Myitkyina 223.5 cm., for Sumprabhum 348 cm. and for Putao 400 cm.

The natural vegetation is forest. The southern lowland regions are covered with tropical deciduous forests containing important stands of teak and other hardwoods. The lowland areas between N'mai Hka and Mali Hka and upper reaches of the Chindwin are under evergreen forests. The mountains, however, are covered with various types of forests ranging from evergreen forests through temperate coniferous forests and temperate scrub to Alpine meadows.

Economy

Agriculture is the predominant occupation of the Kachins. It is confined mostly to the plains, particularly Putao, Myitkyina, Bhamo and Indawgyi plains. Shifting cultivation still prevails although terrace cultivation is now being introduced in the region especially, along Burma-China border. Model agricultural farms have been set up in Putao, Sumprabhum, Sadon, Chipwe, Mohnyin, Kamaing, Bhamo and Shwegu. Rice, wheat, maize, groundnut, sesamum, pulses, chillies, onions, potatoes, tobacco, sugar-cane, tea, mustard and vegetables are grown. Kachin State is also well-known for its leechees, oranges, grapefruits, chestnuts and pears. Double cropping is encouraged.

Washawng, Myothitkalay and Kalakone dams are being used for irrigation, while the Paung-net chaung and Putao dams are now under construction.

Kachin State has 5180 square kilometres of reserved forests and 64750 square kilometres of unreserved forests. Important products of the forests are teak and other hardwoods, firewood and charcoal, cane, bamboo, cutch and resin.

Kachin State is also noted for its jade. Important jade mines are found in Hpakant, Tawhmaw, Longkin and Mawhun. Amber is obtained from Shinbhun and Lagamaw in Hukawng valley. Panning of gold is done in the region between N'mai Hka and Mali Hka, Uru river, Tanai Hka and Ta-hpwe Hká in the Hukawng valley.

Traditional Kachin textiles and Kachin swords and knives are very much valued throughout the country. In addition, there are also rice mills (Mohnyin and Mogaung), saw mills (Myitkyina and Bhamo) and sugar mills (Sahmaw and Namti).

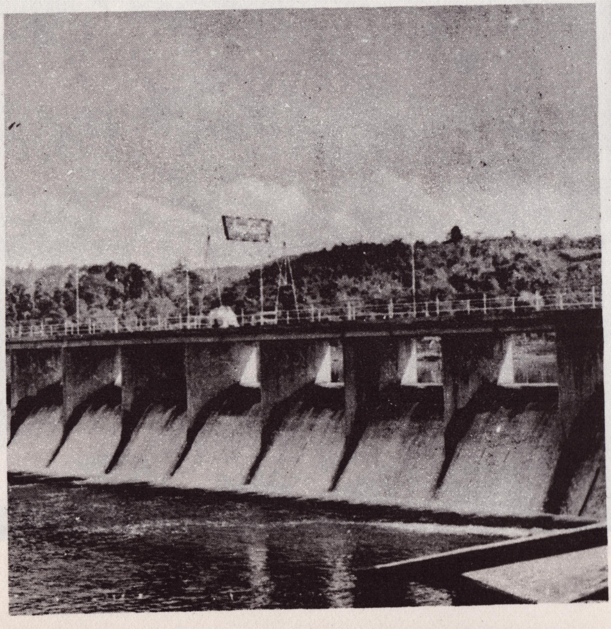
Due to difficult terrain, Kachin State is poorly served by roads and railways. The railway line of 357 km. from Mandalay to Myitkyina, the state capital, is the only railway line in the Kachin State. The Irrawaddy is navigable as far north as Bhamo. There are also roads leading from Myitkyina to various parts of the State; but only some of these are all-weather roads.

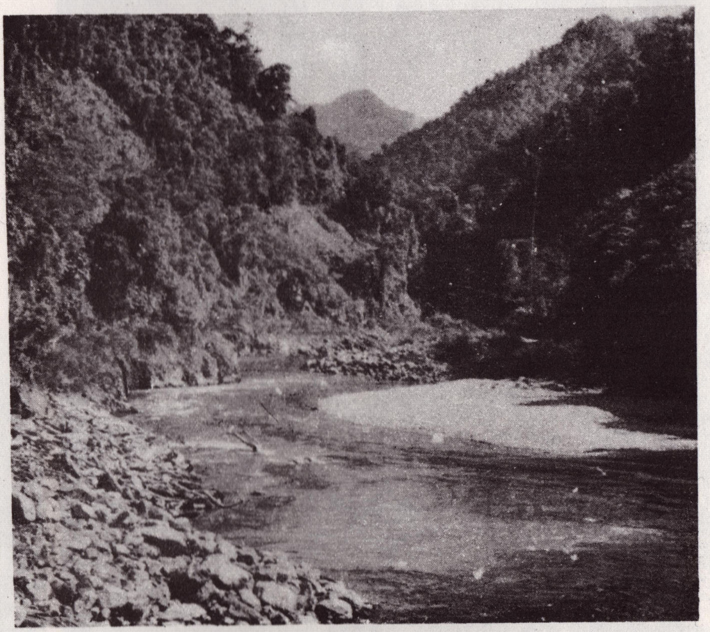
The Myitkyina-Putao road leading northward from Myitkyina passes through Sumprabhum. The Myitkyina-Kamaing road leads westward from Myitkyina. From Kamaing this road leads northwards to Ledo; but this last section of the road is no longer in use. The Myitkyina-Laukhaung road leads north-east to Laukhaung, close to the Chinese border. The Myitkyina-Bhamo road leads southward to Bhamo. From Bhamo the road continues to the border with the People's Republic of China. There are also air services from Rangoon to Myitkyina, Putao and Bhamo.

There are many towns, each interesting in its own way. Myitkyina the state capital is also a railway terminus and has road connections with various parts of the state. Bhamo is famous for teak and good quality rice. It is centrally placed in relation to the rest of Kachin State and Burma Proper. Mogaung lies in a rice and sugar cane area. It is also an important trading centre.

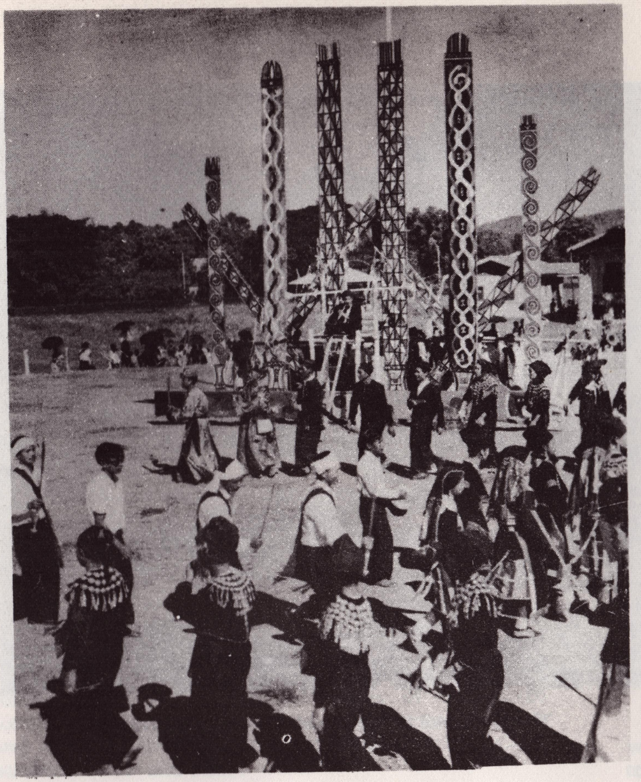
Putao is in the Hkamti plain. The Hkamti plain produces good citrus fruits like oranges and grapefruits.

Washaung Dam



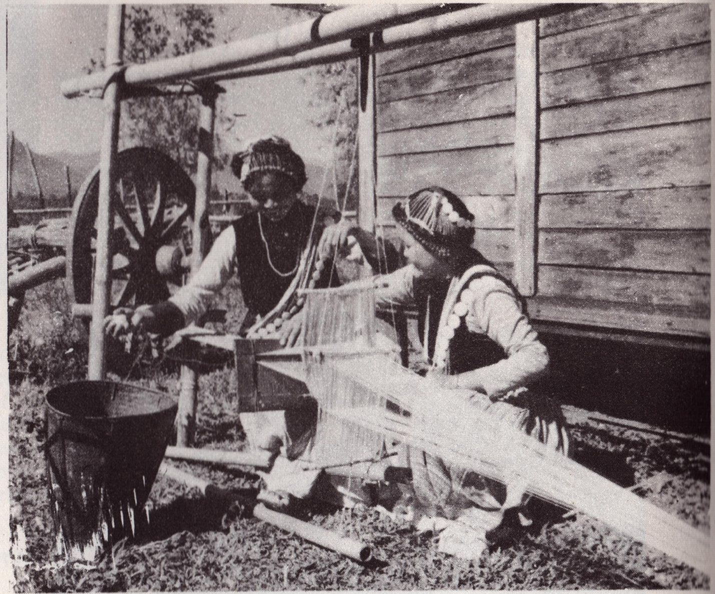


The confluence of the N'mai-Hka and Mali-Hka

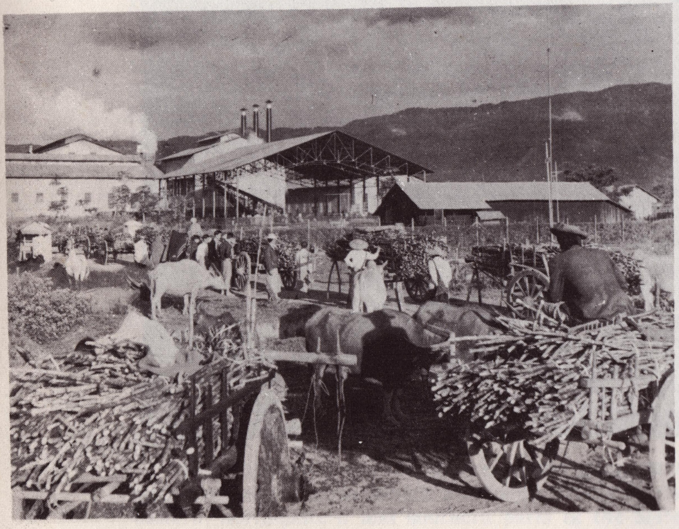


Manao Dance and Manao posts

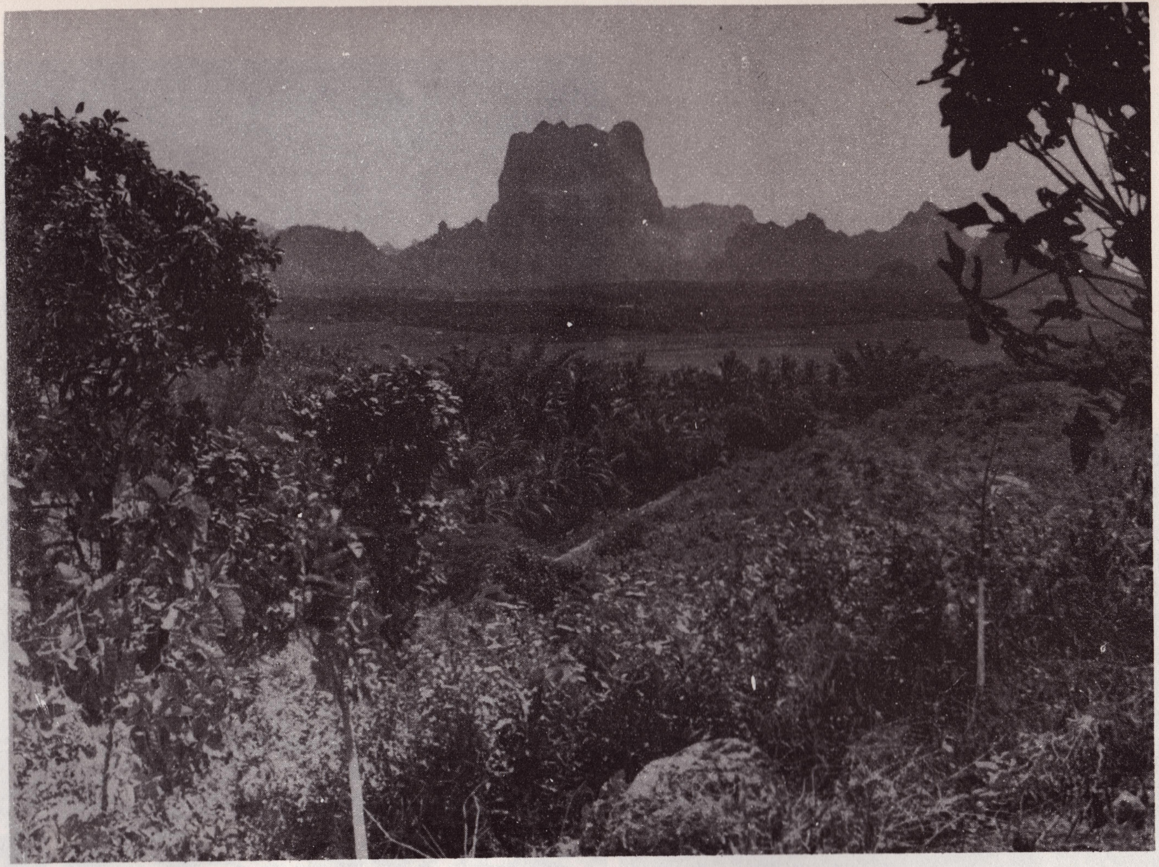
Rawan ladies at the loom



Namtee sugar mill



Trekking on icy mountains.



Lush farmlands around Zwegabin Hill

Karen State

The Karen State is bounded by Mandalay Division in the north, Pegu Division and Mon State on the west, Thailand and Kayah State on the east, and Shan State in northeast. It runs paralled to the Tenasserim coast but has no coastline and is entirely land-locked.

It extends for about 520 km. from north to south, but is only 112 km. at the widest from east to west. In some places it is only 32 km. wide. It has an area of 30383 square kilometres. There are seven townships and 377 village tracts. The seven townships are Pa-an, Hlaingbwe, Papun, Thandaung, Kawkareik, Kya-in Seik-kyi and Myawaddy.

The total population in 1980 was 1.03 million. Most of the people are Karens but there are also Burmans, Mon and Shans. The Karen can be divided into two main groups namely, the Sgaw and the Pwo Karens. The Sagaw Karens are also called Burmese Karens and the Pwo Karens, the Mon Karens.

Physical Background

The Karen State occupies the eastern part of the Tenasserim ranges, which are the continuation of the Shan Highlands. The Salween river and its tributaries flow through Karen State and form the major lines of communications. Rainfall is heavy throughout the region. Pa-an has an average total annual rainfall of over 356 cm. and Thandaung, a total of over 457 cm. The maximun temperature is 27.8° C and minimun temperature is 16°C.

More than 50 per cent of the region is covered with evergreen forests which are found mostly in the eastern, north-eastern and southern parts of the State. Teak is the most important timber. There are 4576 square kilometres of reserved forests and 17462 square kilometres of unreserved forests.

Economy

Agriculture is the chief occupation. Rice, betelnuts, groundnuts, sesamum, peas and beans are grown. In Thandaung, coffee, tea and oranges are important crops. There is a tea factory in Thandaung. Rubber is also grown in plantations. Forests form an important source of income. Besides teak, there are also pyinkado, pyinma, thingan, kanyin, inn, thitya and padauk. The Pa-an Forest Department has successfully planted seedlings of both teak and pyinkado as part of the programme of reforestation. Forest products besides timber are cane, bamboo, honey, cutch, lac, orchids. Bat's droppings gathered from the caves are used as fertilizers and form a valuable source of income.

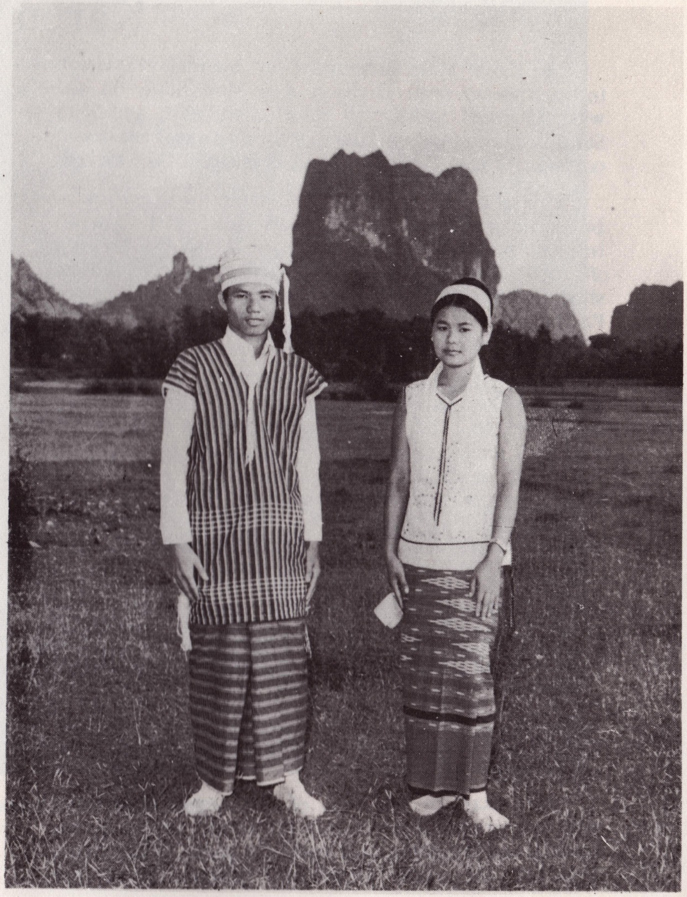
As regards minerals, no proper prospecting has been done yet. However, it is believed that the Karen State is rich in antimony. Limestone is obtained from the hills in Pa-an township.

The Karen State sends rice, groundnuts, tea, coffee, oranges, durians, teak and other hardwoods to other states and divisions. In return it takes various foodstuffs, household utensils, agricultural implements textiles and stationary.

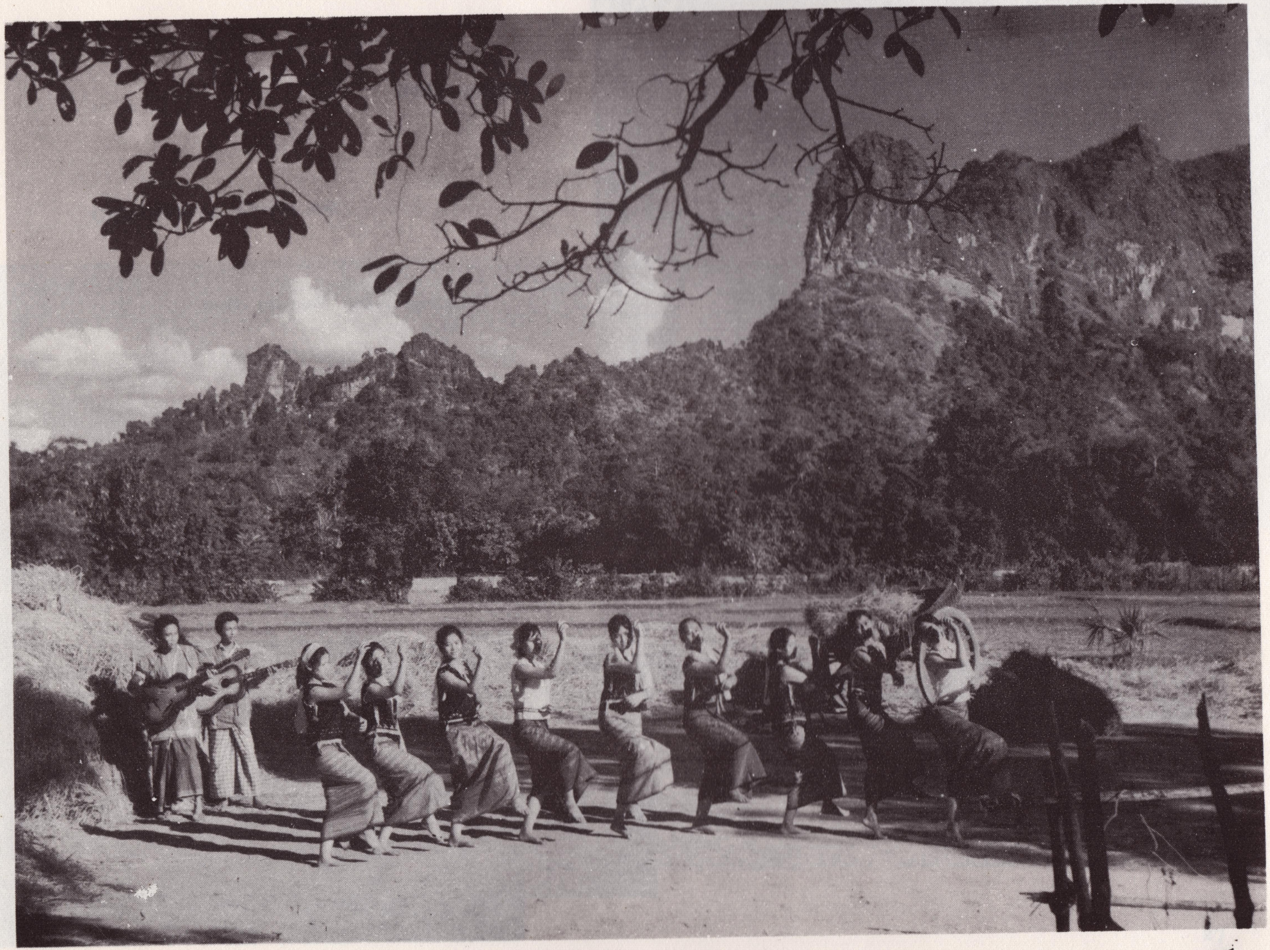
Karen State still has no railway, but is fairly well-provided with natural waterways. Steam boats from Moulmein go up to Shwegun along the Salween river. Others go along the Ataran river up to Kya-in Seik-kyi. Steam boats ferry between Moulmein and Kyondo. Moulmein serves as the natural outlet for this landlocked State.

In the north a road leads from Toungoo to Thandaung and Leiktho. The Toungoo-Mawchi road also passes through the Karen State. In the south the Rangoon-Martaban road, branches out from Thaton, passes through Myainggalay and up to Pa-an. There is another road from Moulmein to Pa-an, which goes through Zarthabyin. This road continues to Hlaingbwe and Shwegun. Passing through Kawkareik there is a road to Myawaddy on the Thai boder from Kyondo.

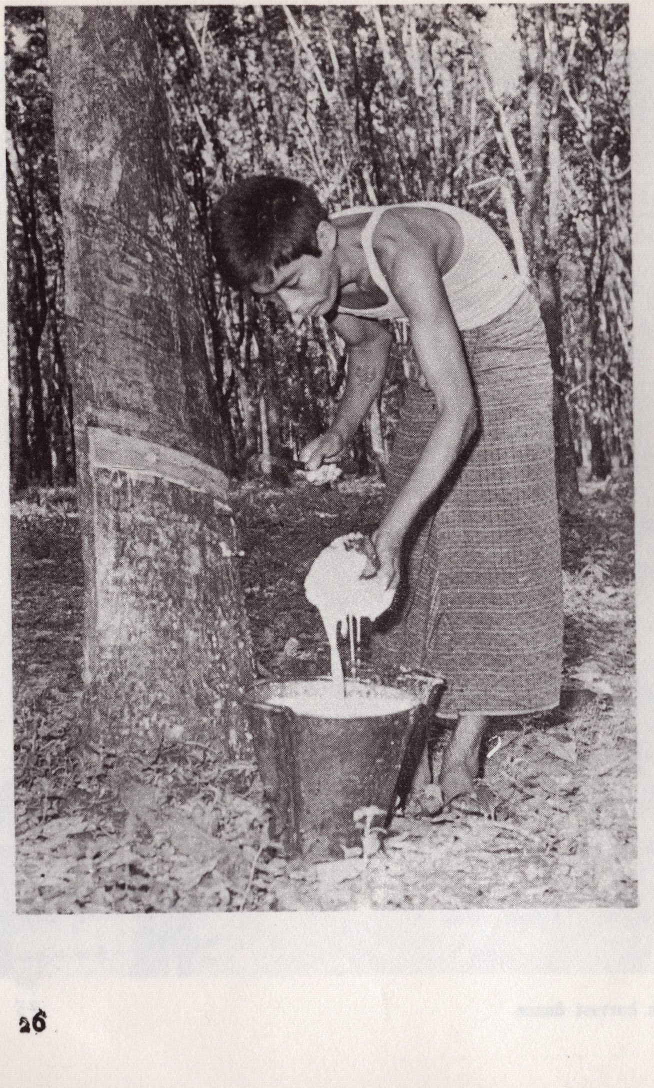
The leading towns of Karen State are Pa-an, Hlaingbwe, Shwegun, Thandaung, Kawkareik, Kya-in Seik-kyi and Myawaddy. Pa-an the capital is centrally placed at the foot of the Zwekabin hill. The Zwekabin hill has a very usual shape, which, once seen, is not easily forgotten. The leading town in the northern section is Thandaung. It is a beautiful hill station, and an important tea, coffee and fruit producing region.



A Karen couple.

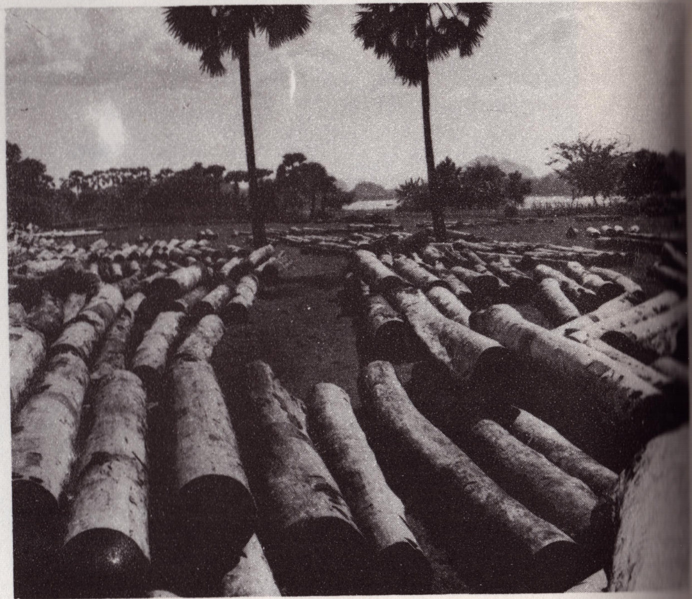


Karen harvest dance

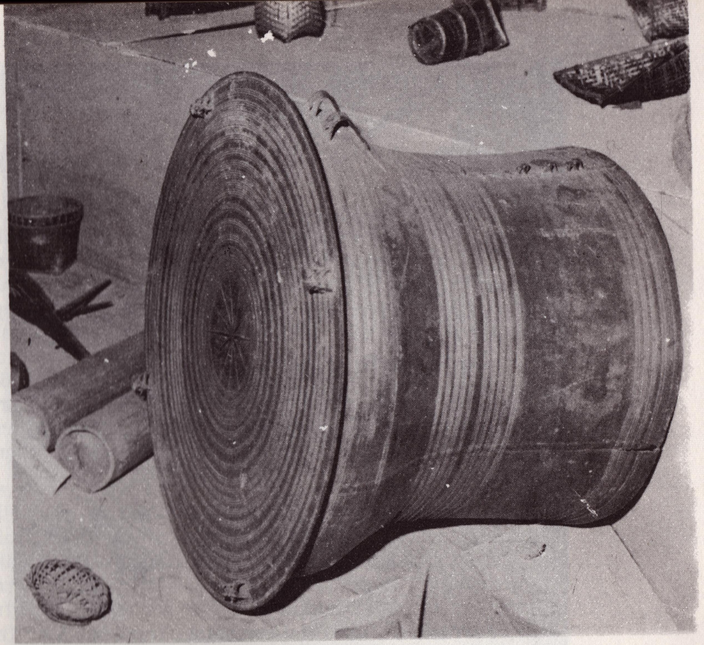


Tapping rubber

Teak logs beside Salween River



Cultivation on alluvial soil



Pharsi, the frog drum of the Karens

Kayah State

Kayah is bounded by Thailand on the east, Karen State on the south and west, and Shan State on the north and north-west. It is the smallest of the seven State of Burma and has an area of 11733 square kilometres. There are six townships and 79 village tracts within this State. The six townships are Loikaw, Demoso, Phruso, Shataw, Hpasaung and Mesainan. The total population is 145,000 in 1980. The nationals of the State are Kayah, Padaung. Bre, Yinbaw, Geko, Manu-Manau, etc. Besides these groups are also Burman, Shan, Intha, Pa-o and others.

Physically, Kayah State is part of the Shan Plateau, but as it continues southward it gradually loses it plateau character. On the whole, the terrain is still rugged and there are some beautiful waterfalls and lakes. There is a group of fourteen lakes 22.5 km. south of Loikaw, which are very beautiful and wrapped up in romantic legends. Of the waterfalls, the Baluchaung waterfalls are now the site of the Lawpita hydro-electric power plant. These and the Mobye and Ngwedaung dams are some of the sightseeing attractions of Kayah State.

Rainfall is only moderate, due to its interior location. Like Kachin, Chin, Shan and Karen States, Kayah State is also landlocked. Loikaw has an annual total rainfall of about 115 cm. There are about 90 days of rain in the year. The average temperature is 21.6° C; the maximum temperature may reach 36° C.

Economy

Here also agriculture is the chief occupation. Rice, wheat, maize, millet, groundnut, sesamum, cotton, soya beans, chillies, onions, garlic, tobacco, oranges, bananas and vegetables are grown. The Government has set up model agriculture farms at Loikaw, Demoso and Hpasaung. Cultivation of coffee is being encouraged. The Government has also built dams and reservoirs to help irrigate the fields and also for hydro-electric power.

The Ngwedaung dam was built chiefly to promote agriculture. The Mobye dam, on the other hand, is a multipurpose dam. It helps to generate hydro-electric power at Lawpita and controls floods along Baluchaung below Loikaw. Also, by damming the Baluchaung at Mobye, a lake has been formed, and this lake now serves as waterway between Loikaw and Yawnghwe.

Kayah State is fairly well-provided with teak and other hardwoods, like Pyinkado, Padauk and Ingyin. Other forest products are lac, cutch, resin and honey.

Kayah State is also rich in minerals, especially tin, wolfram and antimony. The most important mine, is the Mawchi mine, which produces tin and wolfram. Burma's only important hydro-electric plant has been constructed at the Baluchaung waterfalls at Lawpita, some 19 km. south of Loikaw. Kayah State is also famous for its marble works. Kayah State supplies its beautiful marble and terrazzo slabs, tin and wolfram, teak and other forest products, fruits and groundnuts to its neighbouring states and divisions.

Transport and communication lines are yet to be developed in Kayah State. It still has no railway. Loikaw is linked with Yawnghwe by way of the Mobye lake, which is newly formed as a result of the Baluchaung dam. There are roads linking Kayah

State with the Shan State; another road links Loikaw with Toungoo. This road forms an important outlet to other parts of Burma.

The important towns are Loikaw, the capital, Demoso, Phruso, Kyebogyi Bawlakhe, Phasaung and Mawchi.

Baluchaung Falls

Kayah folk dance

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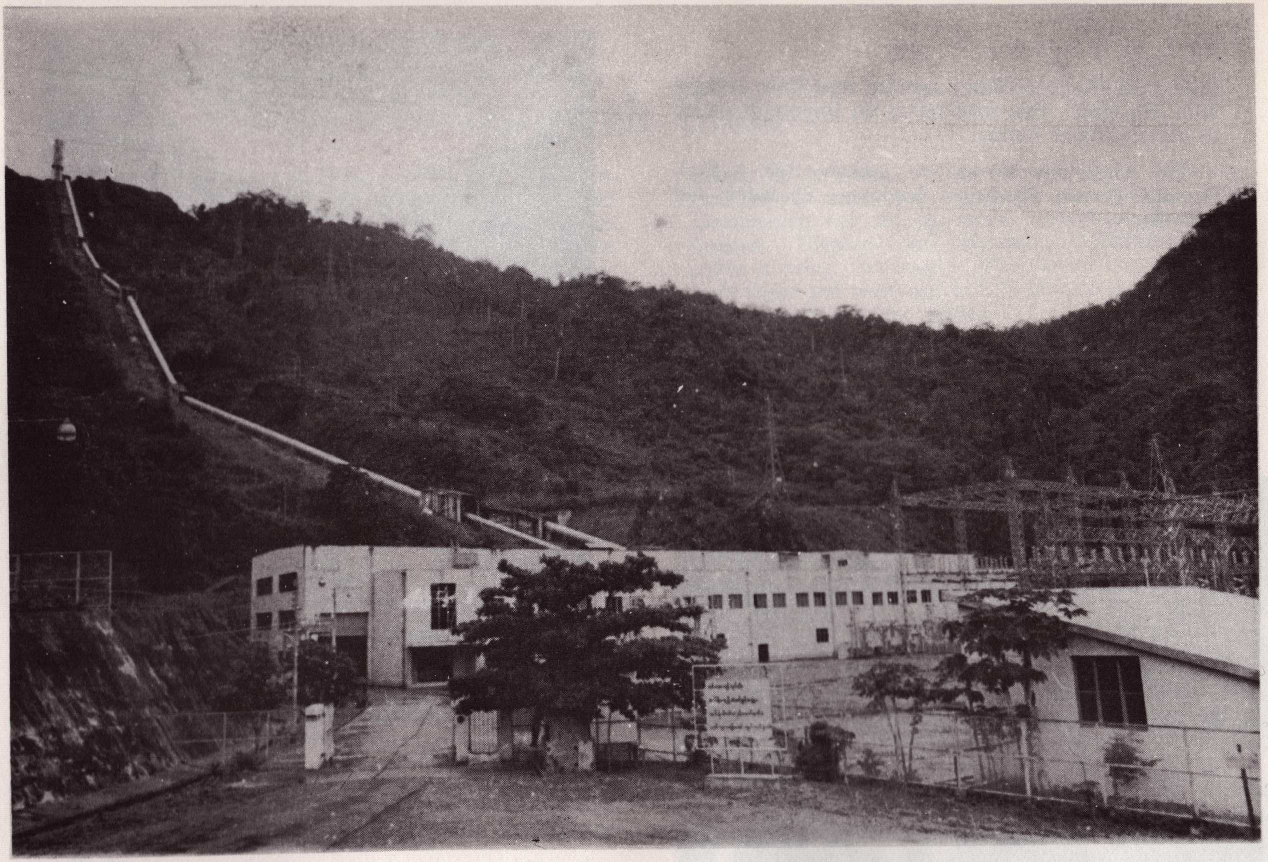
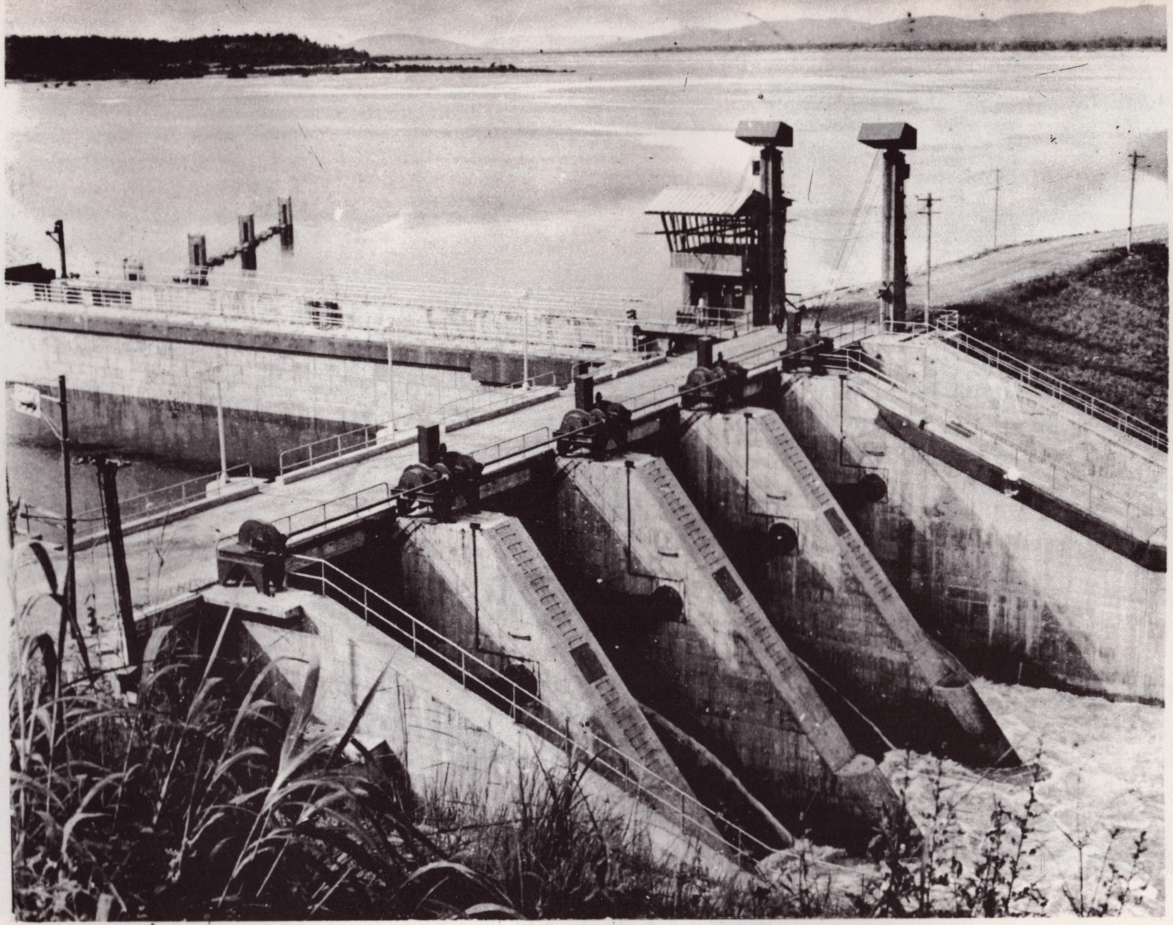


Lawpita Hydroelectric Power Station

Marble products from Kayah State

A Kayah farmer



Mobye Dam

Mon State

The Mon State and Tenasserim Division, together, occupy the southern panhandle of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma. It is bounded by Pegu Division, Karen State and Tenasserim Division on the north, east and south and by the Gulf of Martaban on the west.

It is a coastal region fringed with islands. The more important islands are Balu-kyun, Hintha-kyun and Kalagok-kyun. The two small islands of Green island and Onion island near Kyaikkhami have a lighthouse each. Mon State has an area of 43345 square kilometres. There are 10 townships and 381 village tracts. The total population is over 1.48 million in 1980. The majority of the people are Mons; there are also Karens, Shans, Pa-os, Burmans and Tavoyans. Most of the Burmans are of Mon-Burmese stock. The Tavoyans are not a separate race; they are Burmans, who speak Burmese with a peculiar accent of their own.

Physical Background

The Mon State is a coastal region hemmed in between the Gulf of Martaban in the west and the mountains in the east. The Martaban mountains and the Taung-nyo mountains come close to the coast. The Mon State is therefore elongated in shape just like the Arakan State. It is 310 km. long from north to south, but less than 16 km. from east to west at its narrowest part. The coastline is about 307 km. long.

On the whole, the region is fairly mountainous and the only sizable plain is the Moulmein plain. Other fairly level areas are found in Thaton, Kyaik-maraw (along Ataran river valley), Bilin river valley, and Donthami river valley. There are some attractive limestone caves in this region, *e.g.* the Karone and Dhamathat caves. The Karone cave is about 4 km. from Zarthabyin and the Dhamathat about 30 km. from Moulmein up the Gyaing river. There are lofty caverns with uneven, slippery floors. Water drips from the roof in many places forming stalactites and stalagmites in all stages of development.

The Salween river and its tributaries, the Gyaing, Ataran and Donthami are the most important rivers of the region. The Donthami forms the boundary between Mon and Karen States for 102.5 km., before it enters the Salween river. The Gyaing also forms the Mon-Karen boundary for 17.5 km. The Ataran river is one of the few rivers of Burma which flow from south to north. The Ataran valley is fairly wide but is liable to floods and drainage condition is poor. The two other rivers, farther south, are the War-ka-ru and the Ye rivers. The War-ka-ru enters the sea near Kyaikkhami, and the Ye enters the sea near Zibyuthaung village in Ye township.

This is a hot wet region, the chief source of rain being the southwest monsoon. Moulmein receives about 482 cm. of rainfall. The average annual temperature for Moulmein is 26.6° C; the average for December and January about 25° C, and the average for April and May about 28.3° C.

Economy

Rice is the chief crop in lowland areas, and lower slopes of mountains are used for cultivation of rubber and fruit. The chief crops are rice, rubber, sugar cane, betel nuts and coconuts. Mon State is also noted for its delicious fruits, like durians, mangosteens, and pumaloes. About 58.5 per cent of the region is covered with forests and there are 187,400 hectares of reserved forests. Forests therefore form an important source of income.

Fishing is also an important occupation undertaken, and is on a commercial scale in Kamar-kaye in Chaungzone township, and Zibyuthaung and Ah-Sin in Ye township. Dried fish, dried prawns, fish-paste and fish-sauce are important products.

Mon State is fairly well-endowed with minerals. Antimony is found in Moulmein, Kyaik-maraw, Mudon and Paung township, while tin is mined in Chaungzone and Thanbyuzayat townships. China clay (Kaolin) is found in abundance within the region. There are also quarries in Taungzun, Mokpalin, Zingyaik and Mudon.

Most of the industries are based on agricultural and forest products, and rice milling and saw milling are fairly widespread. There are some outstanding industrial concerns such as, the Bilin Sugar Mill, the Sittang Paper Factory, the Thanbyuzayat Rubber Works, and Mupun Ceramics Factory. Salt is another important product of the Mon State. There are important salterns in Pa-Nga, Setse and Kyaikkhami. Slate and slate pencils are produced in Balu-kyun. Chaungzone township has introduced some interesting new industries, like making of tobacco pipes, hotwater bags, rubber ballons, feather dusters, fancy hair clips made out of coconut shells. Mudon township is noted for its textiles, and there is a Government weaving school in Mudon.

Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda, the rocking Pagoda in Kyaikhto township.

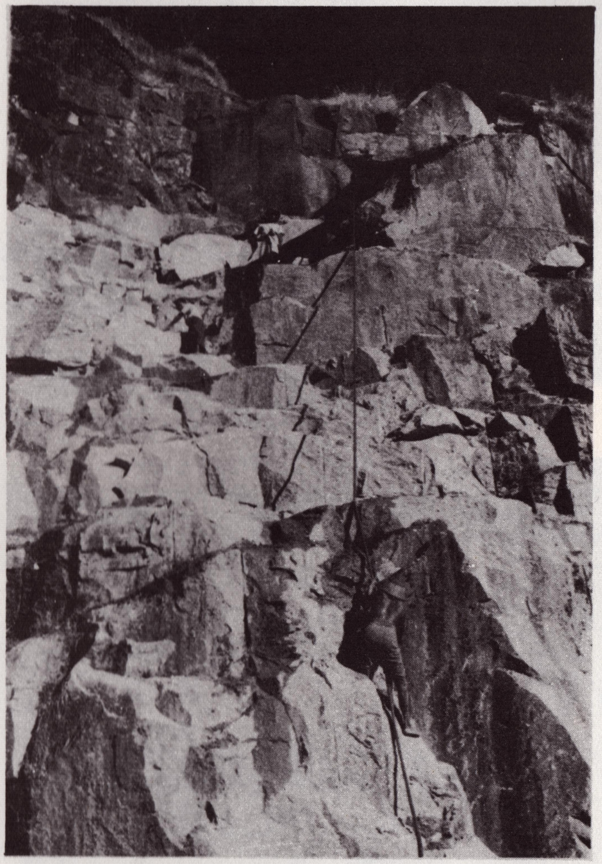
The Salween and its tributaries form the major lines of communication, although they are navigable for only short stretches. Steamboats can go up to Shwegun along the Salween river, and up to Kya-in Seik-kyi along the Ataran river, a distance of a little over 112 km. from Moulmein in each case. The Gyaing river is navigable up to Kyondo, a distance of 67.2 km. from Moulmein.

As regards road and railways, the Mon State is much better off than the other states. Both the road and railway from Rangoon reach Martaban, opposite Moulmein. From Moulmein, the railway continues as far south as Ye, while the road goes beyond the boundary of Mon State right down to Mergui. There is a ferry between Moulmein and Martaban. During the Second World War, the old Sittang bridge was destroyed, but the new bridge now takes its place. This bridge crosses the Sittang river near Kyauk-hnyat. The bridge also carries a motor road, 3.6 m. wide and a footpath, 1 m. wide, on either side of the rail. The total length of the bridge is 693 m. It was opened to traffic on 23rd March, 1963.

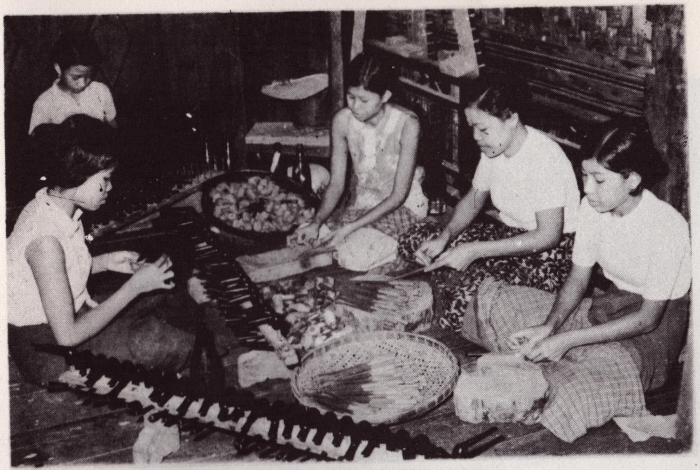
On its eastern border, there are two routes leading to Thailand. The first is the Moulmein-Kawkareik-Myawaddy-Messoud route and the second is the Three Pagodas route leading from Thanbyuzayat.

Important towns are Moulmein, Thaton, Bilin, Kyaikhto, Martaban, Mudon and Kyaikkhami. Moulmein is the capital of the Mon State. It is the port of call for both ocean-going steamers and coastal craft. It lies at the mouth of Salween River about 40 km. upstream from the Gadwin lighthouse. The river splits into two outlets due to the presence of Balu-kyun at its mouth. The outlet flowing westward is called the Da-re-bank river and is navigable to country boats. The southward flowing outlet is the Moulmein river. It is the commercial waterway and entrance channel to the port of Moulmein. Teak logs are floated down the Salween to saw mills in Moulmein. The town lies between the strand and ridge and is therefore elongated.

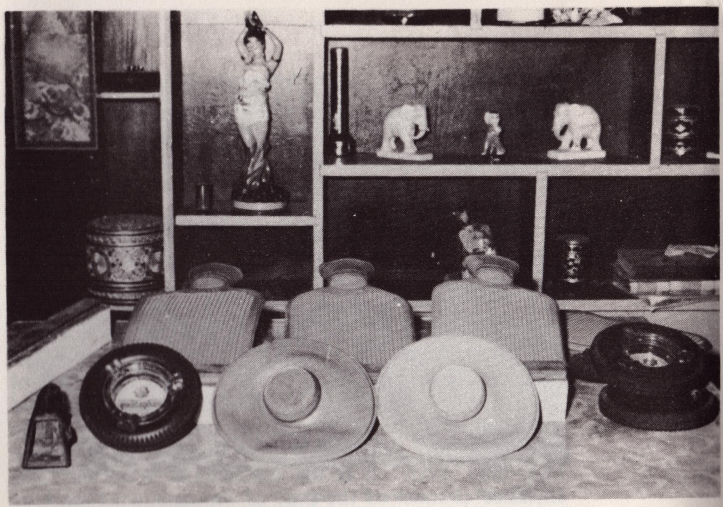
Thaton lies on the Rangoon-Martaban railway and motor-road and is the region for rice and suger cane. Bilin lies on the Rangoon-Martaban motor road. It is noted for its sugar mill. Kyaikhto, like Thaton, is also on the Rangoon-Martaban railway and motor road. Martaban lies on the northern bank of the Gulf of Martaban, opposite Moulmein. It is the road and railway terminus and is linked with Moulmein by a ferry service. Mudon lies 28 km. south of Moulmein by motor road and 24 km. by railway. It is noted for its cotton textiles and is also an important rice and rubber area. Kyaikkhami 88 km. south of Moulmein, is an important seaside resort.



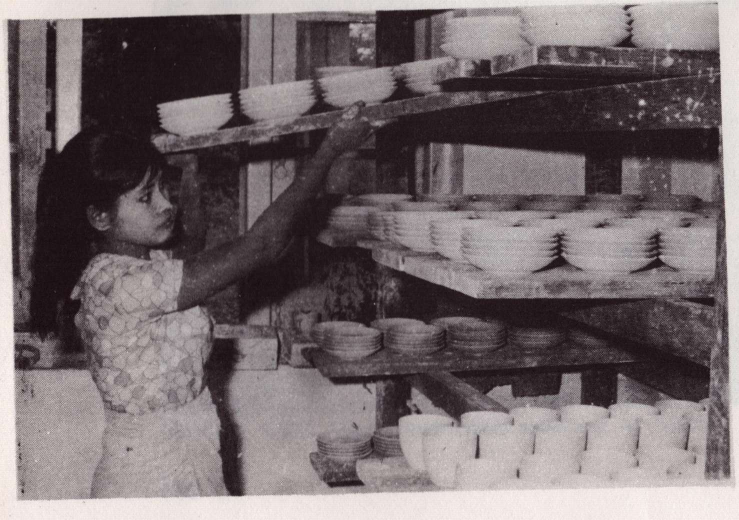
A stone quarry near Paung



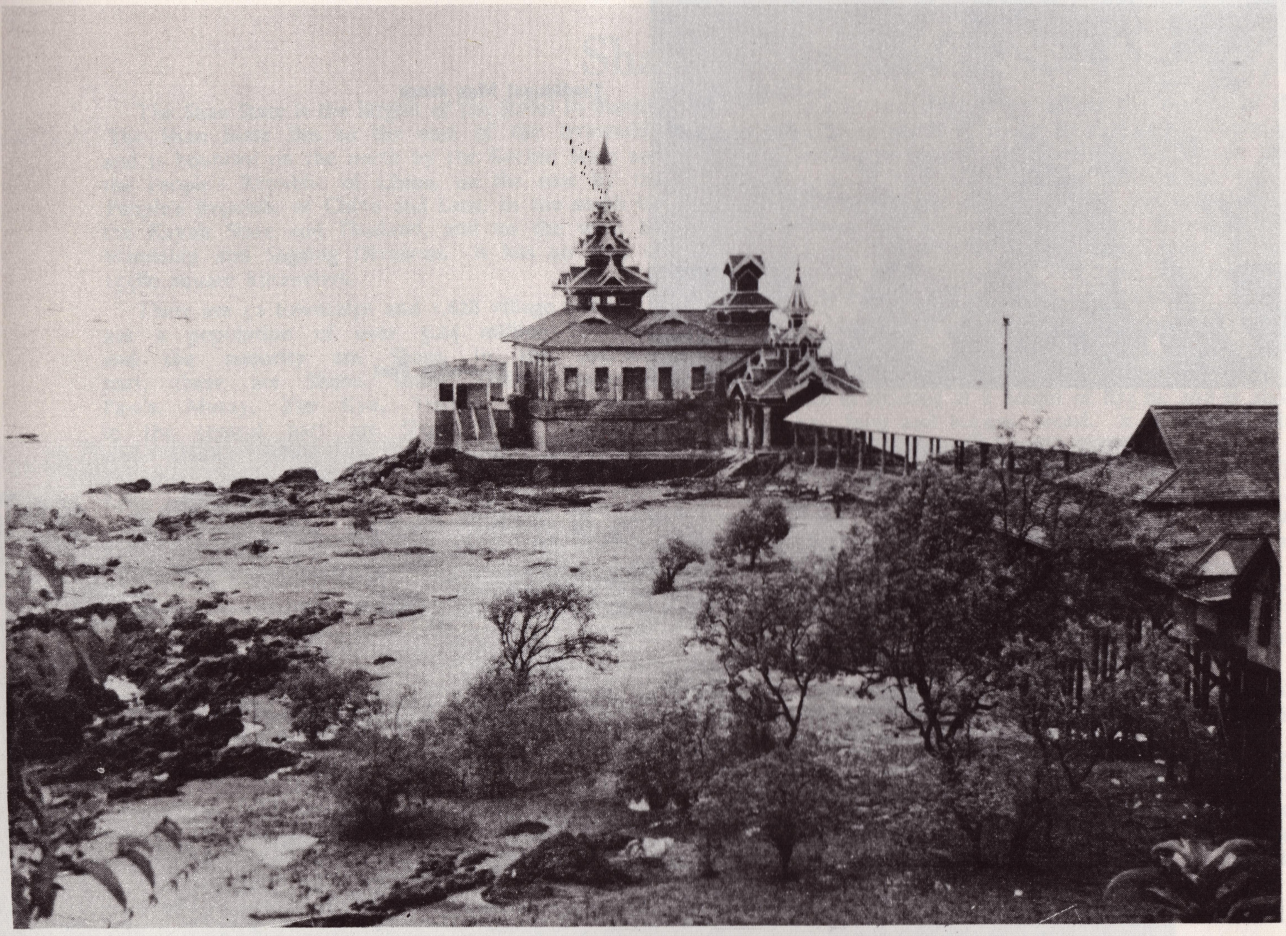
Tobacco pipes industry of Chaungzon



Hot water bags ; part of rubber industry



Mupon ceramicgfactory



Kyaikkhami Pagoda

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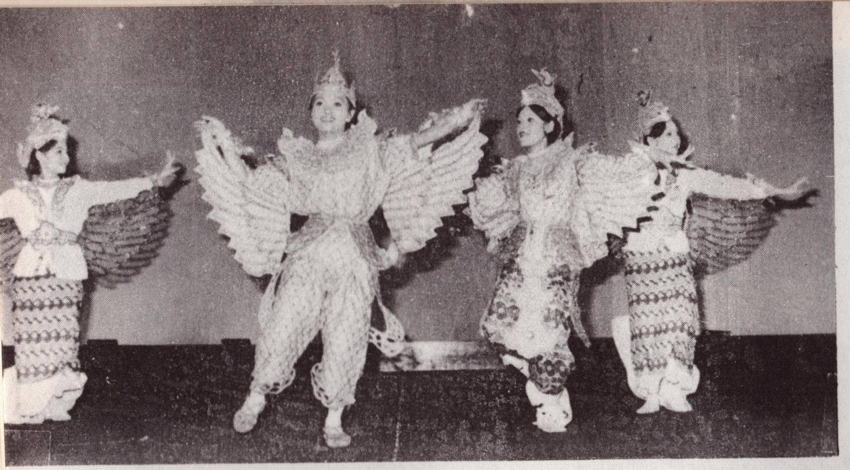


Traditional Mon dance

Moulmein Port

Shan State

The Shan State is the largest of the States in Burma. The Shan State lies to the east of the Irrawaddy and is bounded on the north by the Kachin State and the People's Republic of China, on the east by the People's Republic of China and Laos, in the south by the Kayah State and Thailand, and on the west by Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions. It has an area of 15580 square kilometers.

There are 52 townships and 1,628 village tracts. It has a population of over 3.24 million in 1980, and the majority are Shans. In the southern part, there are Shans, Intha, Danu, Taungyoe, Pa-o's, Musay, Yin Kya, Yin-net and Burmans; in the central part are Shans, Pa-o's Taung-yoe and Danu; while in the north are Shans, Palaung, Kachin, Maintha, Lishaw, Myaungzu, Wa, Lahu and Thais.

Physical Background

The Shan State covers the eastern section of the country, the region generally known as the Shan Plateau. This region is not just a simple plateau but a succession of mountain chains and plateaus. These are much older in age than the western mountains of Burma, and are, in fact, part of the Indo-Malayan block of ancient rocks, which forms the core of Southeast Asian peninsula.

The average height of the Shan Plateau is 900 m. It is composed basically of granite gneissose rocks. These rocks have been covered with rocks of many geological periods, *e.g.* massive limestones and recent alluvial and clay deposits which cover old lake basins. The plateau rises quite abruptly from the Central Basin.

The Salween river flows across the middle of the plateau from north to south in a trough. There are also some structural basins—basins which have been formed as a result of folding or faulting. A typical example is the Inle Lake. This is the only lake of importance in the Shan State today, although there have been several lakes in the past. Most of these have silted up and become dry land, *e.g.* the Heho plain, the Kengtung plain, and Hsenwi plain.

Inle lake is the most famous of Burma's lakes and is very popular with foreign tourists. It is famous for its leg-rowers, the floating islands and scenic beauty. The lake is situated at a height of 875 m. and is about 19.2 km. long and 6.4 km. broad. It is studded with floating islands formed by the growth and decay of vegetation and these are massed round its banks. The soil is naturally very fertile and there is always an abundance of water, so cultivation is easy and successful. Lovely flowers and luscious vegetables are produced. Inle silk is also famous and silk weaving is done in some villages, *e.g.* Inpaw-khone. The celebrated Phaung-daw-oo Pagoda is also in this lake. The Government has also set up Model Workers' and Luyechun camps in this lake.

In limestone areas, there are many caves and streams. The Pindaya and Padalin caves are particulary well known. The Pindaya caves are situated in Southern Shan State. There are thousands of Buddha images, some of which are very richly gilt. The Padalin caves were discovered only recently in 1970 in Ywangan township. A large number of artifacts was found in these caves. On the walls are neolithic paintings, comparable to those found in the caves of Hoabinh and Basson in North Vietnam.

In the Shan State, temperatures are much lower than in the Central Basin due to the difference in height. The average winter temperature is less than 15.5° C and the summer average is a little about 21° C. The chief source of rain is from the south-west monsoon and the southern part is wetter than the north. Taunggyi receives about 150 cm. and Lashio 140 cm. of rainfall. On the whole, it is not too wet, not too cold in winter and not too hot in summer. The Shan State weather is particularly agreeable when it is very hot in the plains. Some of the more accessible towns have become popular hill resorts *e.g.* Kalaw and Taunggyi.

Teak, padauk, pyinkado, pyinma, in, in-gyin and thitya do well under 900 m., above 900 m. there are pines and oaks. The total area of reserved forests is 8125 square kilometers that of unreserved forests, 101200 square kilometers.

Economy

Agriculture is the chief occupation, rice, tea being the leading crops. Other crops are maize, millet, wheat, ground-nuts, soy beans, sugar cane, coffee, temperate fruits (pears, peaches), citrus fruits (oranges), tobacco and cotton. *Thanat* leaves (cheroot wrappers) also form an important product of the Shan State. Poppy cultivation is largely confined to the region east of the Salween, close to the Thai and Laos borders. Recently, these poppy fields are being destroyed and replaced by cultivation of other crops, like pyrethrum. Taungya, or shifting cultivation is still fairly widespread.

Irrigation also plays an important role in agricultural development. Important works are Heho vally canal, Ban-Yin canal, Mong-Hsat valley canal, Nam-lat dam, Nam-kut dam, Mong Lwi diversion canal, and Mong-Sone dam. In addition, the Hopong valley works are now under construction.

Cattle and ponies are raised throughout the Shan State and some are sold for use in Burma Proper. The Government has now set up breeding farms in Taunggyi and Naung Hkio and agricultural (experimental) farms in Taunggyi, Heho, Panglong, Kyaukme and Kut Kai. There is also an Agricultural High School in Naung Hkio.

Forests form an important source of income to the Shan State. Extraction of teak and other hardwood is done on a large scale. Other important products of the forests are firewood, charcoal, turpentine, cutch, resin and bats' guano used as fertilizer.

Shan State is fairly rich in minerals but systematic mining and production has been done only in Bawdwin near Namtu and Bawsaing near Yawnghwe. The Bawdwin mine is one of the richest lead-silver mines in the world. The Burma Corporation virtually had the monopoly to work these mines under the British. After the war, it become a joint venture until January 18, 1965, when the whole concern was nationalized. The Bawsaing mine is also a lead and silver mine, and is now worked by the government.

There are some important industries based on mining, forests, and agriculture. Smelting of lead and silver ores is done in Namtu and Bawsaing. A sugar mill has been set up at Maingthauk near Inle and curing of tobacco is done at Linkhe (Langkho). Small-scale cotton and silk industries and silver works are scattered throughout the region.

Gohtaik Viaduct

There are two main roads and two railway lines linking the Shan State with the Central Basin. The railway line from Mandalay goes as far as Lashio, and the railway from Thazi goes as far as Shwe-Nyaung. The road from Mandalay, after passing through Lashio and Hsenwi reaches Muse and Namkham, close to the border of People's Republic of China. From Namkham it extends to Bhamo. From Hsenwi there is a branch to Kunlong. There was a ferry at Kunlong. but now a bridge has been built across the Salween river. In the south, the road from Thazi leads to Taunggyi and from there it goes to Hopong. At Hopong, it turns southwards to Mawchi. One branch of the road turns eastwards from Taunggyi and finally reaches Kengtung; from there it extends up to Tachileik on the Thai border. There is also a road from Taunggyi to Mongnai, Langkho and Mongpan. This road passes through Mongpawn and Loilem.

Some of the more interesting towns in the Shan State are:

Taunggyi, the capital of the Shan State. It lies on a small plateau at a height of 1415 m. It is a prosperous trading town and an important hill station.

Yawnghwe is situated on the bank of Inle lake in Yawnghwe plain.

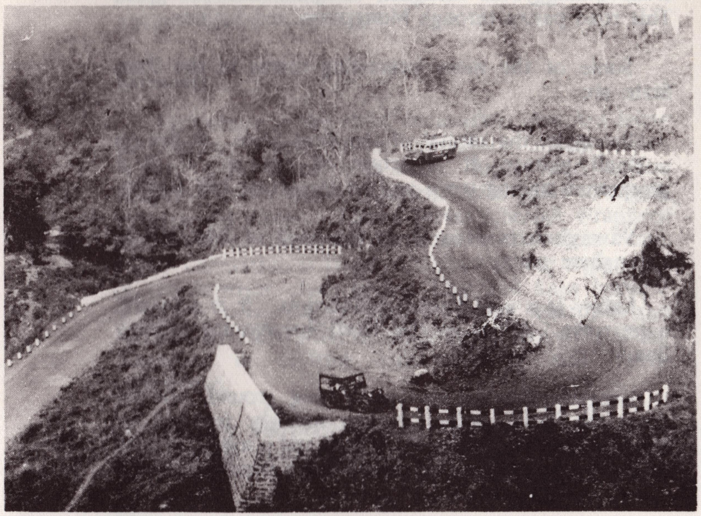
Kalaw is a well known hill-station. It is a lovely, quiet town. It lies on the Thazi-Shwenyaung railway line.

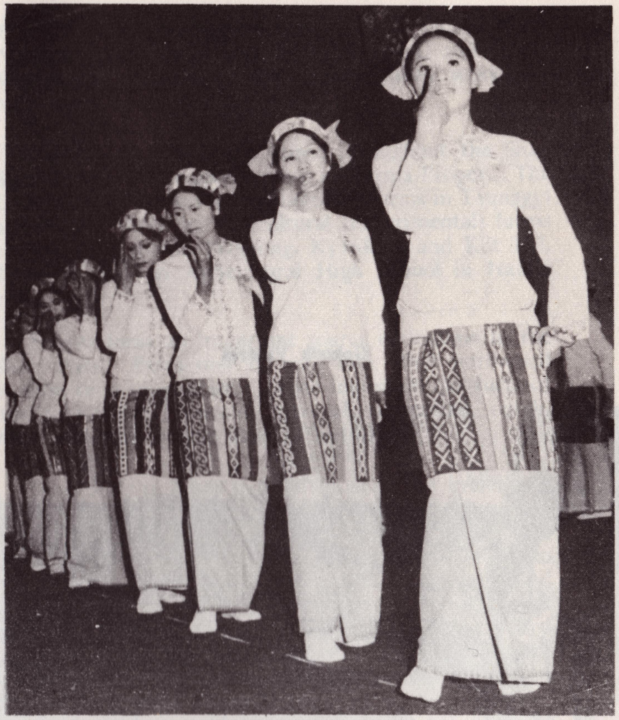
Kengtung lies on low undulating ground, not far from the Thai border. It was strongly fortified by King Alaungpaya with a thick wall and a moat. Today it is an important trading centre and a frontier town.

Hsipaw is situated in a valley on the bank of Myitnge river.

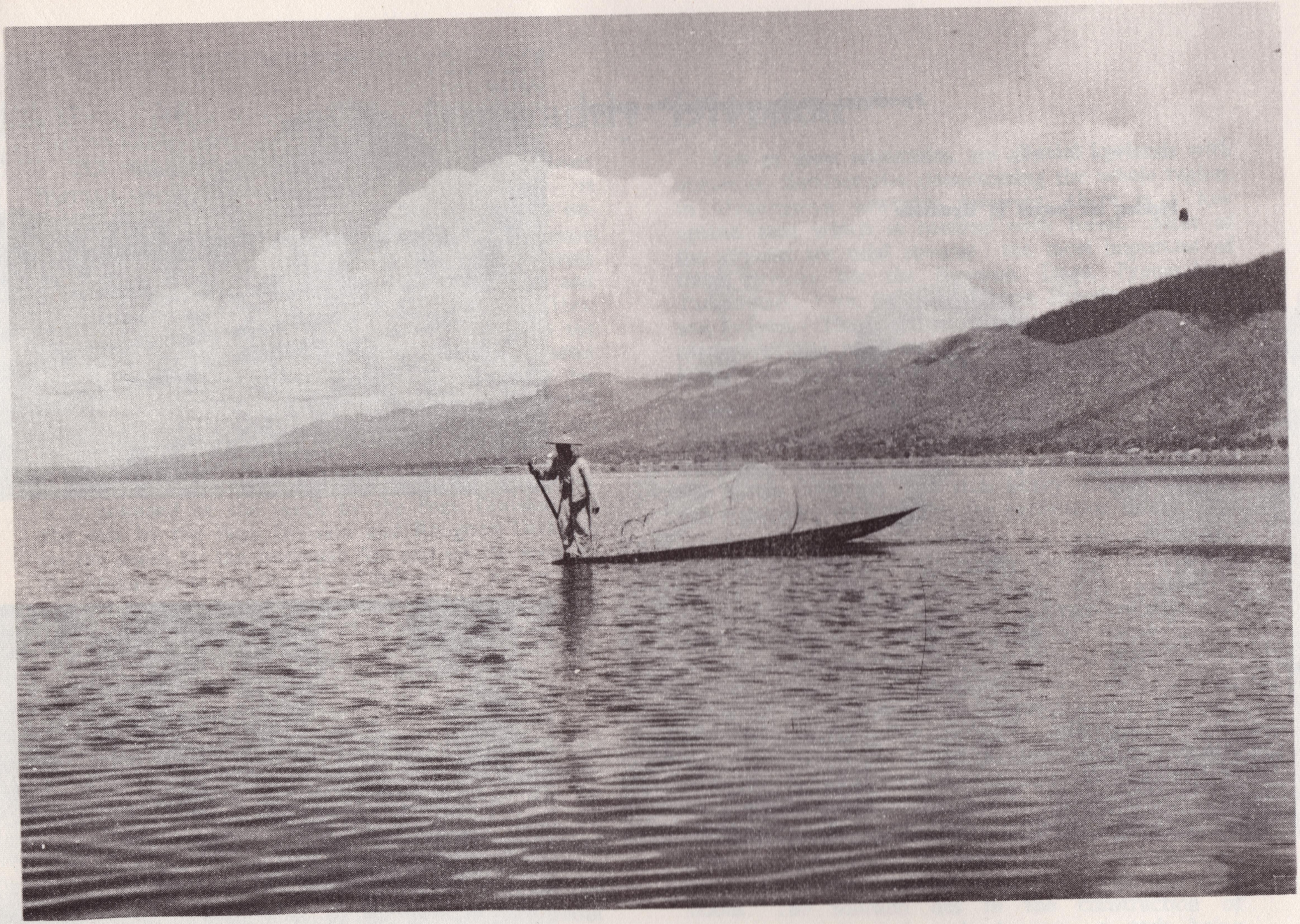
Lashio in the northwestern corner of north Hsenwi lies at a height of 840 m. It has a railway connection with Mandalay.

Road into Kyaukme





Shan traditional dance



Lake Inle

Pyrethrum plants replacing the poppy

Picking tea leaves in Kyaukme

Processing thanat leaves for cheroot wrappers

Irrawaddy Division

The Irrawaddy Division takes its name from Burma's most important river, the Irrawaddy. It covers practically the whole delta region, with the exception of the easternmost part which lies in Rangoon Division. The Irrawaddy valley constitutes Burma proper. This river has headwaters, the Mali Hka and the N'Mai Hka, which rise in the mountains of Tibet. From the extreme north the Irrawaddy runs down the middle of Burma to enter the sea near Rangoon after covering a distance of 1600 km. It is navigable for about 1440 km. and flowing through the most fertile part of the country, is considered the life line and also the main highway of Burma.

The Irrawaddy Division is the "ricebowl" of Burma. It is bounded on the north by the Pegu Division, on the east by the Pegu Division and Rangoon Division, on the south by the Andaman Sea and on the west by the Arakan State and the Bay of Bengal. It has an area of 35138 square kilometers, embracing 26 townships and 1,922 village tracts. There are more than 4.5 million people, the majority of whom are Burmans, although there are a considerable number of Karens also.

Physical Background

This region is the southernmost part of the Central Basin of Burma and has been built up by the Irrawaddy and its numerous distributaries. Except in the far west where it is backed up by the Arakan Yoma, the entire region is almost level. The central watershed of the Arakan Yoma forms the boundary between Henzada and Sandoway townships. These mountains become lower towards the south, and are only about 150 m. high in Bassein, although they are more than 900 m. at the Henzada border.

East of these mountains, are alluvial lowlands with numerous distributaries criss-crossing the whole region. In Myaungmya township however, there is a low upland area which is covered with forest. Most of the streams are tidal streams ; the most important of these streams are the Ngawun, Daga, Pyanmalaw, Panmawadi, Ywe, Pyinsalu, Einme, Shwelaung, Bogale and Pyapon. The coastline of the delta is bordered by mangroves and mudflats. The formation of the delta is not yet complete and it is still expanding.

Economy

Agriculture is the main occupation and the Irrawaddy Division is the leading producer of rice in the whole country. The rich heavy alluvial soils of the region are very suitable for cultivation of rice.

In addition to riceland, there are lands suitable for general crops, such as sesamum, groundnut, jute, maize, pulses and tobacco. These are found mostly in Henzada and Bassein townships and to some extent in Myaungmya. Cultivation of jute is found to be successful and the Irrawaddy Division is now Burma's leading producer of not only rice but also jute. Sunflower is another successful crop. The Irrawaddy Division also supplies Rangoon with bananas and mangoes. Coconuts thrive along the coasts, while along the banks of various streams are the *kaing* crops like chillies, onions, vegetables and tobacco.

Drainage is the chief problem for agriculturalists here, as 75 per cent of the region has impeded drainage. the result of the combination of heavy rain and river floods. The solution lies in the construction of drainage canals and embankments, a task being undertaken by the Irrigation Department.

Cable logging

The total area of reserved forests is about 0.8 million hectares. The tidal and mangrove forests of this division form the chief source of firewood for Rangoon and other urban centres. Trees found in these forests are 'lamu,' 'kanazo' and 'madama.' Madama is also used as fencing poles. Nipa palms which flourish in freshwater swamps are used for roofing, and for walling.

Over the whole region are many lakes which are depressions or obstructed stream channels. These lakes or 'ins' play a significant role in the economic life of the people as they are the leading fishing grounds of the region. There are altogether more than 1,950 fisheries in the region and these yield a substantial revenue. Well-known lake fisheries are the Maletto, the Duya, the Htoo, the Inyegyi and the Shakhaigyi. The products of these fisheries are fish, fish-paste, fish-sauce, dried prawns, which are all basic items of diet for the local people. Salt is another important product of the region, and the leading producers are Ngaputtaw, and Labutta. Still another interesting product is turtle's egg. The Turtle Island, just off the coast of Morton Point or Pagoda Point, south of Cape Negrais, is the leading producer of turtle's eggs.

Regarding minerals, the search for oil was rewarded by the eventual discovery of oil in Myanaung in 1964. Some offshore explorations have also been done since 1972 and there are plans for future exploration of oil.

The industries of the region are essentially based on agriculture. Of the 76 state-owned factories, the majority are rice mills. Recently, jute baling factories have also been constructed. Other state-owned factories include electric power generating mills and the cement factory at Kyangin. Making of mats is widespread throughout the region. Cotton-weaving is done in some big towns. Bassein is noted for its umbrellas, which are popular with tourists,

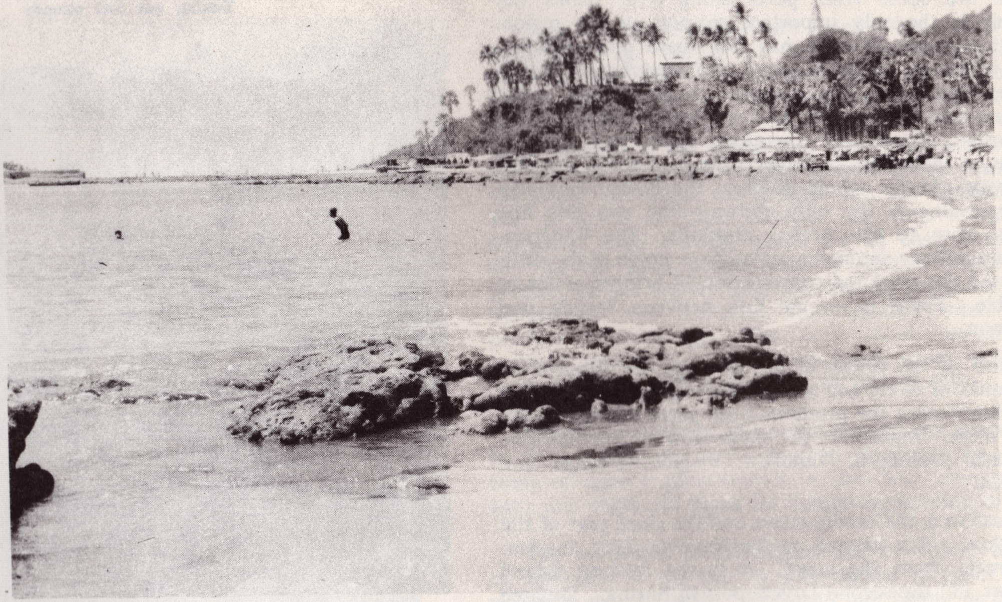
The Irrawaddy and its numerous distributaries form the chief means of transportation within the region. Movement within the region is therefore fairly easy and cheap but restricted to the streams. There are some river ports along river banks but Bassein is the only important sea-port in the region. The Irrawaddy Division has few roads and railways. This is due to the presence of vast stretches of water-logged land and innumerable creeks which make construction of roads and railways difficult and expensive. Roads are therefore short and isolated. There is, however, a project for a Bassein-Monywa highway. In the whole division, the Bassein-Henzada-Kyangin line is the only railway line and this line keeps close to the Arakan foothills. The Rangoon-Bassein railway enters the region from north of the delta to avoid the need for construction of bridges as far as possible. There is an air link between Bassein and Rangoon.

Most of the towns in the Division are situated on the banks of rivers and are usually engaged in collecting and distributing the products from surrounding regions. The more important of these towns are Bassein, Henzada, Danubyu, Yandoon, Pyapon, Dedaye and Maubin.

Bassein is the headquarters and the chief port of the Division. It is located on the Ngawun river, 104 km. upstream from the coast. It is the farthest inland seaport and the second largest port in Burma. Situated on the westernmost tributary of the Irrawaddy, in a rich riceland region, Bassein has become a natural point of export for rice and rice products.

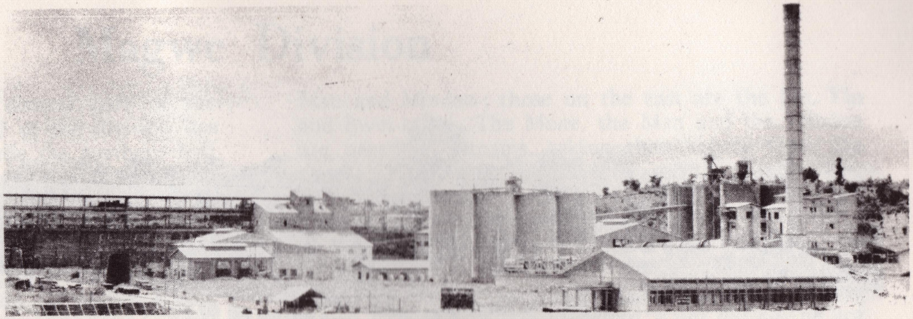
Henzada lying in the centre of the delta reggion, has a more central location than Bassein. The Irrawaddy splits up into numerous distributaries south of Henzada. It is an important commercial centre. Yandoon and Pyapon are noted for fish-paste and dried prawns.

Taking out jute strands

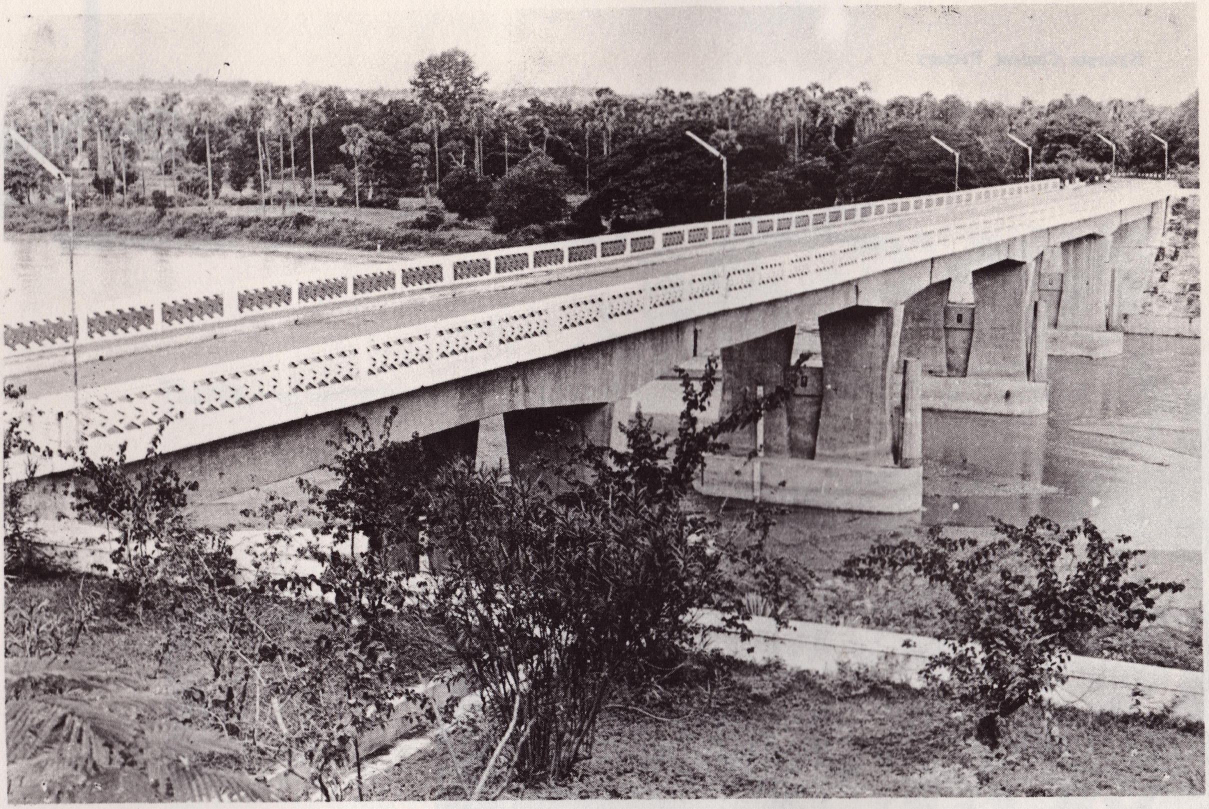


Pagoda on Cape Negrais

Kyangin Cement Factory



A paddy purchasing centre



Yinchaung Bridge

Magwe Division

Magwe Division lies in the central part of the Central Basin. The northern half of the division lies to the west of the Irrawaddy, while the southern half lies on both sides of the river, in contrast to Mandalay Division, which lies entirely to the east of the Irrawaddy. It is bounded on the east by Mandalay Division, on the south by Pegu Division, on the west by the Arakan and Chin States, and on the north by Sagaing Division. It has an area of 44820 square kilometers, and there are 25 townships and 1,542 village tracts. It is the second largest among Burma's seven divisions and has a population of 3.0 million in 1980.

Physical Background

The region is generally low-lying, but is flanked by hills and mountains on eastern and western sides. The Chin hills and the Arakan Yoma are over 1580 m. high with peaks rising to over 3000 m. The Pegu Yoma is only moderately high and very few hills rise about the height of 900 m. These hills form the water divide between Magwe and Mandalay Divisions. Some of the foothills of the Pegu Yoma spread out into Magwe and Thayet townships, The whole Central Basin is composed of sedimentary rocks deposited by the Old Irrawaddy River. On the west bank, these rocks of the Peguan series have been folded into synclines and anticlines. The harder sandstones from these structures remain as hills and mountains, while the softer clays are found along the upper valleys of such streams as the Myit-tha, Yaw, Salin, Mone and Man.

The region is drained by the Irrawaddy and its tributaries ; those on the west are the Yaw, Salin, Mone, Man and Mindon ; those on the east are the Pin, Yin and Bwet-kyee. The Mone, the Man and the Mindon are perennial streams, taking their source from the wetter Chin hills, while the Yaw and the Salin, having their source in the foothills of the Chin hills and the Arakan Yoma, have very little water in the dry season. All the streams in the east have their source in the Pegu Yoma and are only intermittent streams. The Pin and the Yin Chaungs are broad sandy streams which have only a few inches of water during the hot rainless season. The Minbu plain is built up by the Mone, the Man and Salin streams, and the Taungdwingyi plain by the Yin Chaung. The other important plain is the Aung-lan plain. The Irrawaddy also forms the divisional boundary between Magwe and Mandalay for about 96 km. from north of Myingyan to just north of Chauk. In the north, the Chindwin river forms the boundary between Magwe and Sagaing Divisions. The upper reaches of the Myittha river also lie within Magwe Division.

Magwe Division is fairly dry ; Thayetmyo has about 100 cm. of rainfall and Minbu, Magwe and Pakokku each has about 75 cm. The valleys in the west, receive between 130 cm. and 150 cm. The Pegu Yoma has about 100 cm. Both the amout of rainfall and the number of rainy days are variable. During the dry season the average maximum temperature generally exceeds 38° C. The rainy season is much cooler than in Lower Burma. Most of the region is covered with shrubs but the hills and the foothills in the west and along the Pegu Yoma are covered with low open forests.

Magwe Division has a total arable area of 1.1 million hectares. The actual net cultivated area is roughly about 0.8 million hectares, the majority of which are concentrated around Magwe and Pakokku. In Upper Burma, because there is an early and a late rainfall, crop rotation is practised. Wherever possible, the land is either double cropped or mixed cropped. The leading crops of Magwe Division are maize, millet, peas and beans, sesamum, groundnut and cotton.

Irrigation is also important in this region. Most of the irrigation works are located in Minbu District; the chief works are the Aingma works on the Man Chaung, the Mezali on the Mone and the Linzin on the Salin. Rice and cotton are grown under irrigation. The irrigated rice areas are Minbu, Salin and Pwint-byu. Minbu is a surplus rice area. The non-irrigated ricelands are located chiefly in the valleys of the west, *e.g.* the upper reaches of Mindon, Man, Mone, Saw, Yaw and Myittha, where the rainfall averages between 130 cm. and 150 cm. Tobacco, pulses, potatoes, onions and a great range of vegetables are also grown on surrounding islands.

On the whole, the Magwe Division is a region of diversified agriculture which aims primarily at subsistence, rather than commerce. However, surplus yields like tobacco, oilseeds, chillies, onions and potatoes are sent to various parts of Burma.

Magwe Division has 10050 square kiometres of reserved forests and 12365 square kilometres of unreserved forests. Taungdwingyi area produces teak with black stripes which are of special value.

The mineral of importance within Magwe Division is oil (petroleum). Oil and natural gas are found in Yenangyaung, Chauk, Lanywa, Minbu, Yenangyat, Yenan-me, Manchaung and Letpando.

Other minerals found within the region are limestone and gypsum from Thayetmyo and Pakokku; chalk and clay from Minhla and Pakokku; and manganese from Minbu.

Minbu has the largest number of rice mills while Magwe is the leading producer of cooking oil. There is a mint at Wazi, on the opposite bank of Chauk, where Burma's coins, currency notes, bank cheque books, state lottery tickets and maps are printed. Pakokku, Yezagyo, Myaing, Magwe, Gangaw, Yaw and Saw are important textile producing towns. Yaw, Saw and Gangaw are famous for black Yaw longyis and pinni cloth. The black vegetable dye is colour fast and the cloth very durable. Saw mills are located in Pakokku, Magwe, Minbu and Thayet townships.

There is an oil refinery and two fertilizer plants within the region. The refinery is in Chauk, the fertilizer plants are in Sale and Kyunchaung. Both fertilizer plants produce urea, utilizing natural gas from Chauk (Sale plant) and Yenangyat (Kyun-chung plant) oilfields. In Thayetmyo, there is a cement factory. Finally, there is a tractor assembling plant at Malun in Minhla township.

The Irrawaddy river forms the chief means of communications. The interior parts are poorly served by roads and railways. There is only one railway line in the region. The roads on the east bank are comparatively in a better condition. The Rangoon-Mandalay highway passes through this division. Coming from Prome it passes through Aunglan, Taungdwingyi, Magwe and Yenangyaung to Kyaukpadaung. From Magwe the road branches northeast, passing through Natmauk, to meet Rangoon-Mandalay at Pyawbwe. From Kyaukpadaung one road goes east to Meiktila on the Rangoon-Mandalay highway and the other northeast to Taungtha and Myingyan. Still another branch from Kyaukpadaung leads to Nyaung-oo on the east bank of the Irrawaddy.

On the west bank of the Irrawaddy, the roads are fewer and shorter, generally serving as feeders to the main waterway, linking the riverports with the interior. They usually run in an east-west direction. Starting from the south, the road from Thayetmyo leads to Mindon. From Minbu, there is a road to Ngape at the head of the An Pass. Another road goes through Sagu and Pwintbyu to Salin and Saytoketaya. From Seikpyu, opposite Chauk, the road leads westward to Saw and Kanpetlet in the Chin State. From Pakokku. one road extends to Pauk, Htilin, Gangaw and Kan and the other to Yezagyo. In addition on the above there are some north-south roads linking the east-west roads. Generally, they are just dry weather roads. In the south one such road from Thayetmyo runs northward to Minhla. Another road from Sinbyukyun runs northward to join the Seikpyu-Saw road just west of Seikpyu. From Saw, the road leading north reaches Kyaukhtu and continues northward to join the Pakokku-Pauk-Mindat road.

With a few exceptions, most of the big towns are river ports. Magwe on the east bank of the Irrawaddy is the headquarters of the division and an important focal point for river and road transport. It has an air link with Rangoon.

Pakokku lies on the west bank, some distance downstream from Myingyan on the opposite bank. It is important commercial centre and a focal point of roads; one road from here leads into Sagaing Division, and another road leads into the Chin State. Pakokku has a cigarette factory. It is also an important centre for Buddhist studies.

Minbu on the opposite bank of Magwe, is an important irrigated area. It is also noted for its mud volcano. The Man oilfield is quite close by. The famous Shwesettaw Pagoda is also reached from here. The Shwesettaw Pagoda has an annual festival which used to last one whole month, from the first to the last day of Tabaung, the twelfth Burmese month. It has now been extended up to the time of the Thingyan, the Burmese New Year festival.

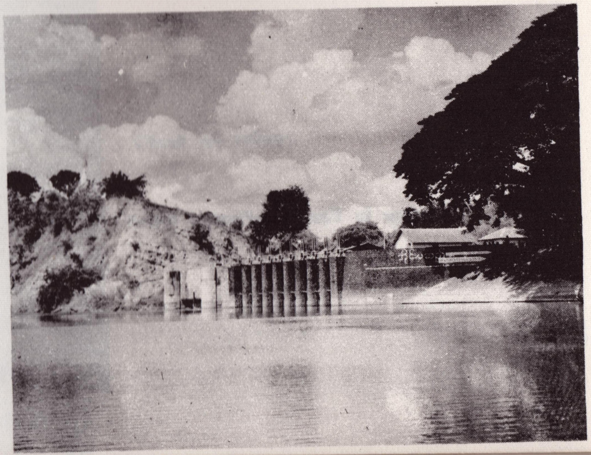
Thayetmyo is a leading town in the southern part of the division. It has a cement factory. Just north of Thayetmyo, the Pegu Yoma and the Arakan hills come close together making the Irrawaddy valley very narrow. This short stretch is the last of the four defiles of the Irrawaddy. The historic Minhla fort from which the Burmese resisted invasion of the English during the Third Anglo-Burmese war lies nearby.

Chauk and Yenangyaung are important oil towns Chauk has a refinery and a candle factory. Crude oil from Yenangyaung is piped to Chauk.

Sale and Kyunchaung both have fertilizer plants. Sale is the birth place of the celebrated Burmese prose writer U Ponnya.

Natmauk is the birthplace of Bogyoke Aung San. the heroic national leader of Burma.

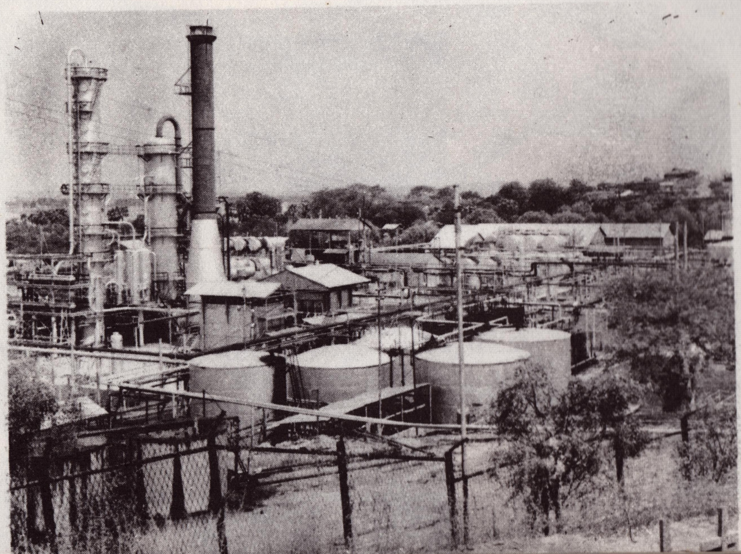
Aingma Dam



Shwesettaw Pagoda annual festival

Timber in Pontaung-Ponnya forest

Kyunchaung Fertilizer Plant

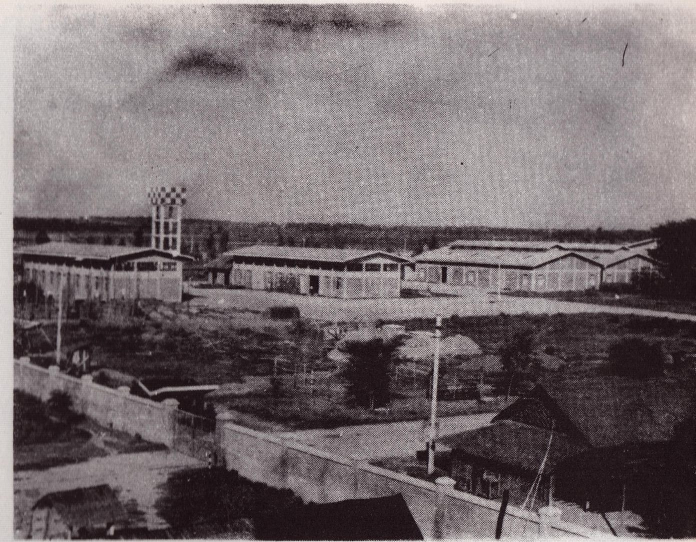


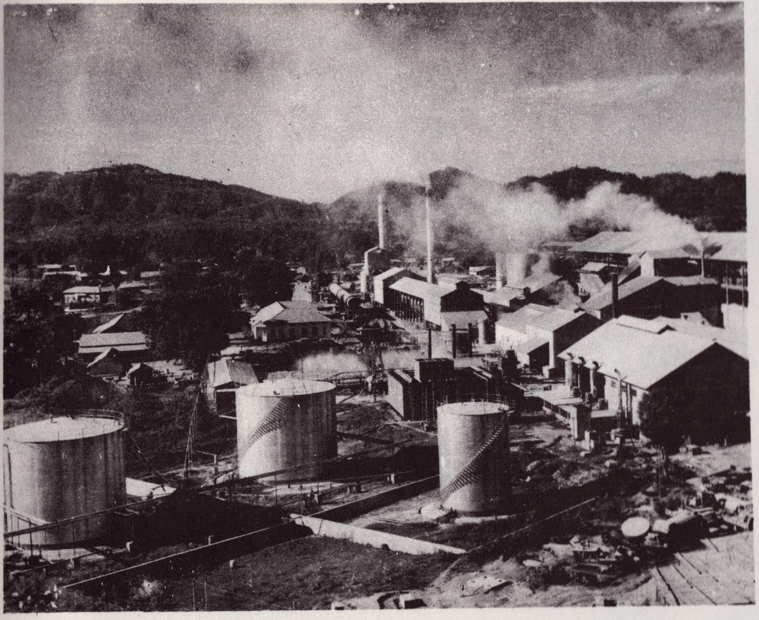
Chauk oil refinery

Harvesting sesamum

Magwe cotton

Pakokku Cigarette Factory





Thayetmyo Cement Factory

ရေနံနှင့်သဘာဝဓါတ်ငွေ့
စုပေါင်းလက်ခံစခန်း(၁)
ရေနံထုတ်လုပ်ရေးဌာန
မန်းရေနံမြေ

Mann oilfields

Malun tractors

Mandalay Division

Mandalay Division occupies the central part of the Central Basin of Burma. It lies between the Irrawaddy and the Shan Plateau and includes the Mandalay-Kyaukse plain, the northern part of Pegu Yoma and the Shan foothills. It is bounded by the Shan State, Sagaing, Magwe and Pegu Divisions and the Karen State. It has an area of 37024 square kilometers, and there are 29 townships and 1,580 village tracts. It has a population of 4,23,700 in 1980 and the majority of the people are Burmans.

Physical Background

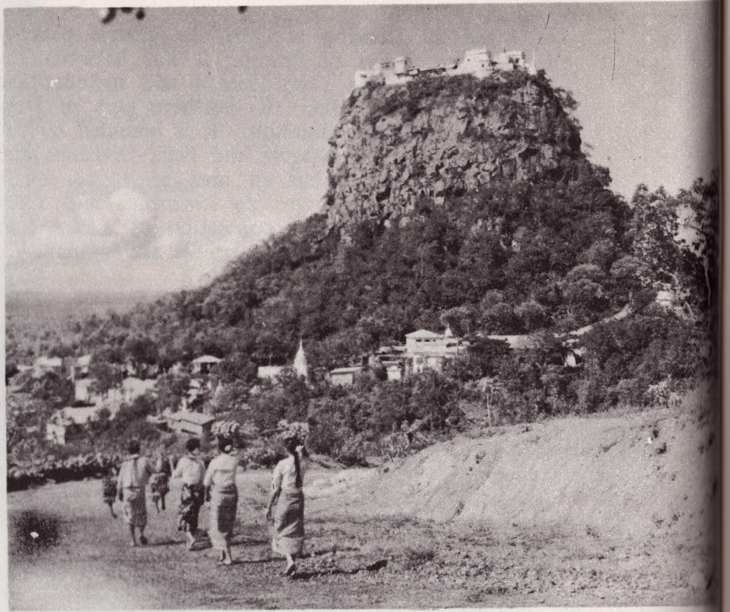
As Mandalay Division occupies the Central Basin of Burma, it is generally low lying. The general height of the region is less than 150 m., but there are higher areas, such as the Shan foothills, and the Shan plateau. Mt. Popa, at the northern end of the Pegu Yoma is a distinctive landmark rising to a height of 1495 m. out of the surrounding lowlying region. Close to Mandalay itself are Mandalay hill and Yankin hill. There are also some river terraces which have been built up by the Old Irrawaddy River. The region is drained by two river systems, the Irrawaddy in the north, and the Sittang in the south. In the northern part of the region, the Irrawaddy flows in the west forming the divisional boundary between Mandalay and its two western neighbours, Sagaing and Magwe. The Irrawaddy enters Mandalay Division just north of Tagaung. On entering the region it flows in a southerly direction, bends westward near Mandalay, but straightens out again near Myinmu to continue in a southwesterly direction until it leaves the division just north of Chauk. Near Thabeik-kyin the mountains on both sides of the river come close together to form the third defile of the Irrawaddy. The tributaries of the Irrawaddy within the region are those that enter the river from the east. They are the Chaungmagyi, the Myitnge (Dok-hta-waddy), the Zawgyi, Samon and its tributaries, Thitsone, Shaw-pin and Thin-bone chaungs. Of the tributaries of the Sittang river, only those in the north lie within the region; they are the Sinthe, Ngalaik and Paunglaung.

Mandalay Division is long and narrow with a very irregular outline. It is about 450 km. from north to south and about 160 km. at the widest from east to west. Climatic conditions, therefore, vary from place to place. The average temperature for the whole region excluding the highlands, is about 26.5°C for the year. April is the hottest month and temperatures may exceed 38°C for days. With the coming of the rains temperatures drop appreciably. The coldest month is January, with an average temperature of 20°C to 24°C. In Maymyo and Mogok, conditions are quite different. Temperatures are much lower due to their location on the highlands. Temperatures may drop to 0°C in December and January. Rainfall in the region is generally scanty. The Mandalay-Myingyan-Yamethin area receiving about 75 cm. to 100 cm. of rainfall is perhaps the driest part. From this central region rainfall increases outwards in all direction. Pyinmana has 128 cm. to 150 cm., Maymyo a little over 150 cm. and Mogok over 254 cm. Vegetation varies with the amount of rainfall received. In the drier areas are scrubs, shrubs and thorn bushes and a variety of plants of the cactus family, htanaung, tamarind and toddy palms are found.

Economy

Mandalay Division is the original heartland of Burma. Within this region many of Burma's old capitals are found. Amarapura, Pinya, Ava, Pagan and Mandalay all lie within the region. Mandalay Division is one of the most developed regions of Upper Burma.

Agriculture has been practised here since very early days. It now has a total cultivated area of 1.4 million hectares, the majority of which are "Ya" lands and not rice lands as in the case of Lower Burma. Farmers of the "Ya" lands grow a variety of dry zone crops such as maize, millet, chillies, groundnut, sesamum and pulses. In growing these crops they have a system of crop rotation, double cropping and mixed cropping practices which they have tried out for generations. Here, and throughout Upper Burma wet rice is usually grown under irrigation. At present, cotton, jute and sugar cane are also grown with the help of irrigation. The important irrigation works in Mandalay are the Chaungmagyi canal and the Shwetachaung canal. In Kyaukse, there are the Zawgyi system and the Panlaung system with their canals. Lately, new works have been added and there are further plans for still other works. The new constructions within the division are : the Monedaing in Meiktila, the Kyetmautaung in Kyaukpadaung, the Pyaungpya and Yeni in Nwahtogyi, the Thitsone in Pyawbwe, the Yezin in Pyinmana and Sedawgyi near Mandalay. In addition there are also "Kaing" lands (islands), gardens and orchards. There are many islands in the Irrawaddy river; some are permanent, some are liable to changes and some may be carried away entirely by floods. These islands are covered with alluvium and very fertile. The banks of the



Mount Popa

rivers, also, are often covered with alluvial soils. These alluvial lands are locally known as "Kaing" lands. "Kaing" crops include onions, chillies, tobacco, maize, tomatoes and other vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are grown in orchards and gardens. Mangoes, guavas and bananas are grown in most of the townships. Grapes are also found to be successful in Mandalay, Pyawbwe and Popa areas. Betel vine (leaves eaten with areca or betel nuts) is an important and profitable garden crop. The hill areas are noted for exotic fruits (peaches, pears, damsons, strawberries) and vegetables (cabbages, cauliflower, carrot, etc.). There are also coffee and mulberry plaatations in Maymyo. Cattle, sheep and goats are also reared. Cattle are reared chiefly for draught purposes, but in Maymyo township, they also keep milch cows. Sheep and goats are raised for meat. There are also fresh-water lake-fisheries.

Mandalay Division's forests are located mainly in the southernmost and the northernmost parts. The total area of reserved forests is 93570 hectares; that of unreserved forests is 0.5 million hectares. Teak and Pyinkado are the chief products.

Mandalay Division is fairly rich in minerals. Mogok is Burma's leading producer of precious stones, and is famous for its rubies and sapphires. The eastern part of Yamethin has copper, iron ore, tin and tungsten. Tin and tungsten are found in association with granite intrusions. Iron ore is also found in Wetwun in Maymyo township. Barytes are mined near Maymyo and in Kyaukse, Gypsum in Kyaukpadaung and Popa. Manganese is found near Thabeikkyin and limestone near Mogok.

Sheep rearing in Meiktila

As regards industries, most of them are based on agricultural and forest product. There are rice mills and oil mills in Mandalay, Myingyan and Meiktila, saw mills in Mandalay and Pyinmana and textile mills in Mandalay, Amarapura, Thedaw, Wundwin, Meiktila and Paleik. Maymyo also has a silk weaving mill, a condensed milk factory, and a fruit and vegetable canning plant. Mandalay has a distillery and a soft drinks factory. Railway carriages are constructed in Paleik while repairs to railway carriages and engines are done in Myitnge. Tractors are repaired in Meiktila. Other industries include weaving of blankets making of leather goods and matches. Recently a candle factory was set up in Mandalay. There are also projects for establishing a cement factory at Kyaukse and a paper mill at Ye-ni. Cottage industries also play an important role in the economy of the region. Mandalay is famous for works of sculpture and gold and silver embroidery industry. Pagan and Nyaung-U are famous centres for lacquerware.

Mandalay Division is fairly well served with road and railway transportation. Mandalay is connected with Rangoon by two highways and a railway. The road leading from Rangoon through Toungoo and Pyinmana lies to the east of the Pegu Yoma; the second road which goes by way of Prome and Taungdwingyi lies to the west of the Pegu Yoma. These are north-south roads. There are also some east-west roads which are the Kyaukpadaung-Nyaung-U road, Myingyan-Meiktila road, Myingyan-Myittha-Tada-U road, Meiktila-Taunggyi road, Mandalay-Mogok road and Mandalay-Lashio road.

The Rangoon-Mandalay railway follows the Rangoon-Mandalay road (east route). There is a diversion from Pyinmana through Kyaukpadaung to Kyee-ni. From Thazi, there is a line leading to Myingyan, and another leading to Shwenyaung. From Mandalay there are four railway lines connecting Mandalay with Madaya, Lashio, Monywa-Budalin and Myitkyina. Mandalay and Nyaung-U have also air connections with Rangoon. The Irrawaddy river served the Mandalay Division as it does the Kachin State, the Sagaing, Magwe, Pegu and Rangoon Divisions. It is navigable as far north as Bhamo and as far south as Rangoon, thus linking Mandalay Division with both the Kachin State and Rangoon Division.

There are many important towns in this division, but only a few may be mentioned here.

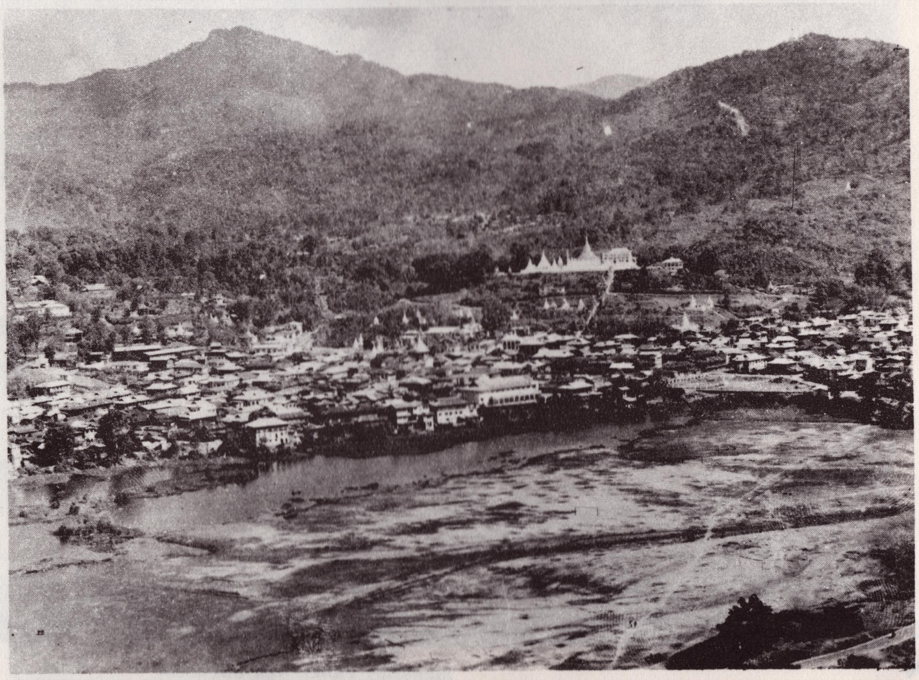
Mandalay, founded in 1857 as King Mindon's capital has large sentimental value as the capital of the last Burmese monarch, King Thibaw. Mandalay represents the indestructible heart of Burma. It still boasts of the finely built palace walls and the beautiful moat around the four sides of those walls. Besides being a cultural centre, it is also a great centre for Buddhist learning as is evident from the large number of huge monasteries and numerous pagodas.

Mandalay with its 478,800 population has been described as one of the most charming places of the world.

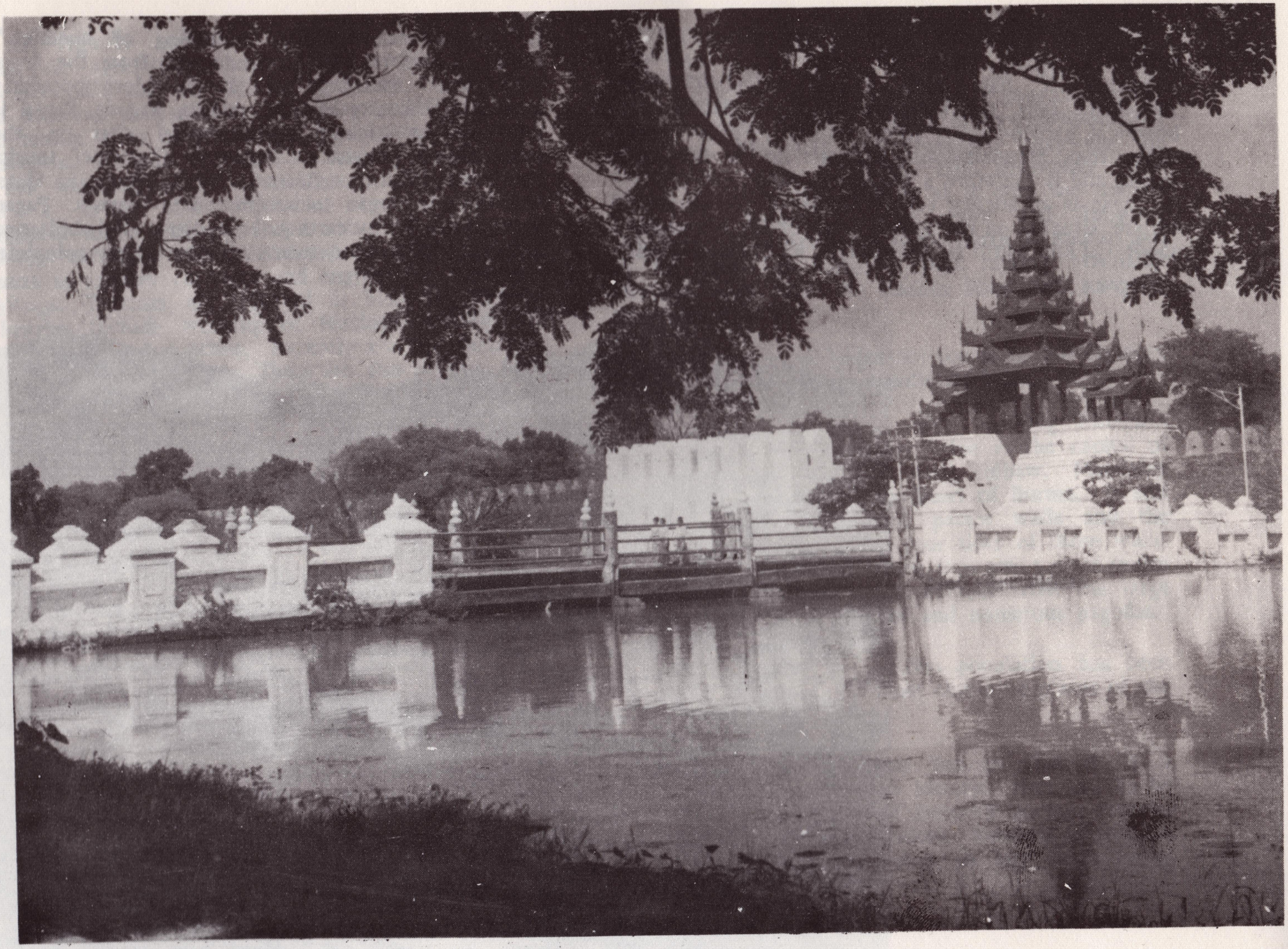
Mandalay's preciousness lies in that it is a repository of late Burmese history. Here are to be found all the elements of Burma's ancient system, educational, social and political. Symbols of religion are richer in Mandalay than in any other living Burmese city.

Maymyo is located on the Shan plateau at a height of 960 m. above sea level, 69 km. east of Mandalay. It has some lovely waterfalls (the Anisakhan falls, the Pwegauk falls). It also has a botanical garden and a forest museum. It is much cooler than Mandalay and Rangoon in the hot dry season and is therefore a suitable summer resort.

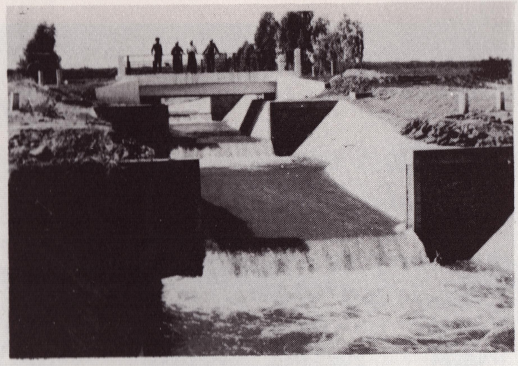
Pagan is an ancient ruined capital of the Burmese empire, situated on the eastern bank of the Irrawaddy about 192 km. south of Mandalay. Its classical name is Arimaddana, meaning "crushing of enemies." Pagan is said to have been derived from the word "Pyugama" meaning Pyu village. More popularly known as the city of four million pagoda, Pagan is one of the richest archaeological sites in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Pagan is the chief tourist attraction of Burma. Recently the Thiripyitsaya Hotel was built in Pagan to accommodate tourists. Pagan was severely hit by earthquake in 1975. Rehabilitation and repair of its monuments are now nearly complete.



Mogok ruby land.



Mandalay Palace wall and moat



Yezin Dam (top left)

Chaungmagyi Dam (top right)

Cotton growing in Kyaukse (bottom)

Historic Pagan.

Pegu Division

Pegu Division occupies the southern part of the Central Basin of Burma and is flanked on the east by the eastern highlands, and on the west by the Arakan Yoma. It is bounded on the north by Magwe and Mandalay Divisions, on the east by Karen State, on the south by Mon State, the Gulf of Martaban and Rangoon Division, and on the west by Irrawaddy Division and Arakan State. It has an area of 39404 sq. km. There are 28 townships and 1,381 village tracts. It has a population of 3,465,200 in 1980. There are also Mons and Karens interspersed with the Burmans.

Physical Background

Flanked by the Arakan Yoma and the eastern highlands, Pegu Division is generally low-lying except in the centre where the Pegu Yoma running from north to south forms the backbone to the region. The eastern highlands, which are the continuation of Shan Plateau present a steep dissected front, with a general height of about 1000 m. The Pegu Yoma on the other hand is not very high, barely rising to above 650 m. in the north and getting lower and narrower towards the south. The Pegu ridge continues southward into Rangoon Division. In the west of Pegu Division is the Arakan Yoma. These hills form the divisional boundary with the Arakan State for about 72 km.

Pegu Division is drained by the Irrawaddy and its tributaries, the Nawin Chaung and the Myitmakha river. The Irrawaddy forms the boundary between Pegu Division and Irrawaddy Division for about 128 km. The Nawin joins the Irrawaddy near Prome. The Myitmakha begins its source in the Pegu Yoma, flows southwards through the division, and finally enters the Rangoon Division, where it is known as the Hlaing or the Rangoon river. In the east, the region is drained by the Sittang and its tributaries. The tributaries are short, swift streams, and are likely to flood the area around occasionally during the rains. The tributaries on the west are Swa, Kabaung, Pyu, Kunn and Yenwe; those on the east are Pyone, Kyauk-Kyee and Shwegyin. The Sittang itself flows through a large valley. Pegu Division has a coast line of about 64 km. along the Gulf of Martaban.

Pegu Division, like the rest of the country, enjoys a tropical climate. The southern part of the division receives an annual rainfall of more than 250 cm. and the Sittang valley obout 200 cm. while Prome, near the northwestern end of the division and slightly in the rainshadow of the Arakan Yoma has a rainfall about 125 cm. In fact, Prome is a transition region between the wet alluvial zone and the dry zone of Central Burma. Pegu has about 132 days of rain, Toungoo about 115 days and Prome about 88 days annually. In general, the amount of rainfall and the number of rainy days decrease going from south to north and from east to west. Tropical rain forests covered over areas with more than 250 cm. but most of these have now been cleared for cultivation. Teak and other valuable hardwoods are found along the Pegu Yoma which receives an annual rainfall of 200 cm.

Economy

The chief crops are rice, groundnut, pulses, jute, tobacco and sugar cane. Rice is grown chiefly over alluvial soils which are found along the valleys of the

Sittang, the Irrawaddy, the Nawin and the Myitmakha. Pegu Division is the second largest producer of paddy in Burma, next to the Irrawaddy Division. In the foothills of the Pegu Yoma and the eastern highlands where soils are less fertile general crops such as sugar cane, pulses and sesamum are grown. Tobacco is grown along the river banks. In recent years, cultivation of jute in tidal tracts has been encouraged.

In the northern part of the division, in Prome and Toungoo townships irrigation is required to make double cropping possible. The North Nawin dam is now under construction near Prome. In many other parts of the division. measures to improve drainage conditions. such as dyking, building of drainage canals and embankments and other flood control measures need promotion. In the case of Myitmakha river, the Forest Department has dredged the river to improve logging conditions and to reduce silting in Rangoon harbour. Forestry has a important role in the economy of the region. The total area of reserved forests in this division is 13253 sq. km.

Pegu Division is a prosperous agricultural region, which is fairly accessible both by land and river. It has also the advantage of proximity to large centres of population. Most of the industries are based on agricultural and forest products, like rice milling and saw milling. There are also textile industries, and Shwedaung cotton textiles are famous for top quality. The factory set up by Heavy Industry Corporation at Sinde opposite Prome produces tractors and various other agricultural accessories, water-pumps and insecticide sprayers.

An important oilfield was discovered near Prome in 1965. This field has been producing about 3,000 barrels daily. Another mineral found here is white china clay (Kaolin) which is a basic raw material in the ceramic industry. It is found in the foothills east of Minhla near Tharrawaddy. Tharrawaddy is now producing some good quality chinaware. There are also some good prospects for salt industry along the coast.

On the whole, Pegu Division is well-provided with both water and land transportation. The Irrawaddy river which passes along the western side of this division supplies the main water-way. The Sittang river father east, cannot be fully utilized because of navigation difficulties. The Sittang river is primarily used for floating logs since the flow of the river is swift. The Sittang river is connected with the Pegu river by means of a canal, 60 km. long which provides a direct route to Rangoon.

In addition, there is a railway line of 258 km. from Rangoon to Prome. This was Burma's very first railway line built in 1877. There is a branch line from Letpadan to Henzada and Bassein linking the region with the Irrawaddy Division. The Rangoon-Toungoo line forms a section of the main Rangoon-Mandalay railway. Another railway with a motor road running parallel goes from Pegu to Martaban in the south opposite Moulmein, the capital of Mon State. The Rangoon-Tharrawaddy-Prome road links the upper part of the division with Rangoon. The Rangoon-Toungoo-Meiktila road and the Rangoon-Prome-Myingyan road are section of the Rangoon-Mandalay Highways.

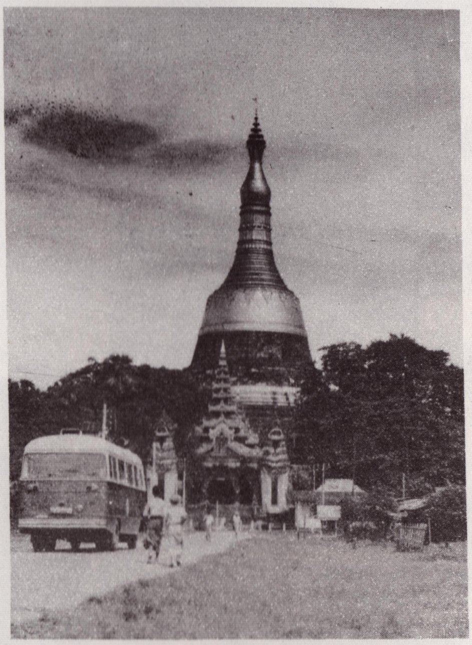
The towns of Pegu Division are divided into two groups by the Pegu Yoma running from North to South. Towns on the east of the Pegu Yoma are Yedashe, Toungoo, Pyu, Nyaunglebin, Daik-U, and Pegu while those on the west are Prome, Shwedaung, Paungde, Zigon, Gyobingauk, Okpo, Minhla, Letpadan, Tharrawaddy and Thonze.

Toungoo, lying on the west bank of the Salween river is an important road and railway junction. It has road connections with the Kayah State and the Shan State and is a collecting and distributing centre for fruits, vegetables, tea, coffee and other products from these regions. It was an old capital under King Tabinshwehti.

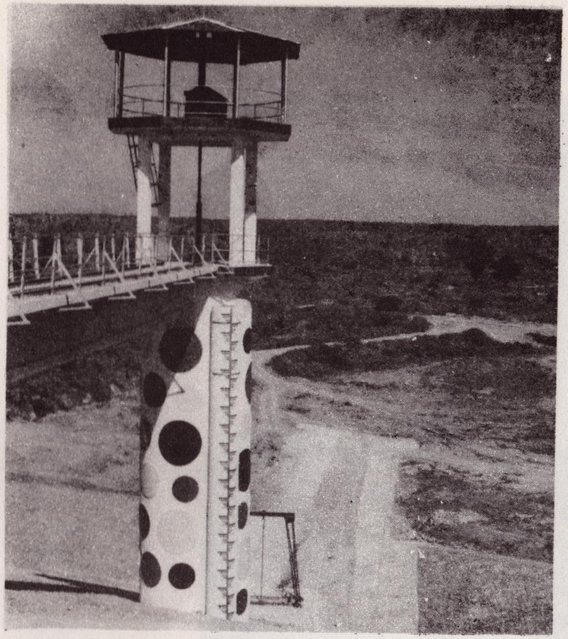
Pegu, the headquarters of the division, lies on the east bank of the Pegu river. It is about 80 km. from Rangoon and like Toungoo is also a road and railway junction. It is a collecting centre for paddy, bamboo and timber logs. Pegu was the capital of the old Mon kingdom. The colossal recumbent image of the Buddha, the Shwethalyaung, is located about 1 km. west of Pegu. The Shwethalyaung Pagoda is considered the largest complete image of the human figure in the world.

Prome, at the upper end of the Pegu Division and on the east bank of the Irrawaddy, is a road, railway and river junction, actively engaged in the exchange of goods and products between Upper and Lower Burma. Across the river lies, Sinde, a centre for heavy industries. From Padaung, also on the river bank opposite Prome, a road leads to Taungup and Sandoway in the Arakan State. At Hmawza (old city of Prome) stands a field museum housing 100 selected stone and terracotta objects collected at the site by the Archaeological Department.

Tharrawaddy, Minhla, Okpo, Zigon, Letpadan, on the west and Pyu, Penwegon, Nyaunglebin on the east of the Pegu Yoma are trading centres for collection and distribution of local products.

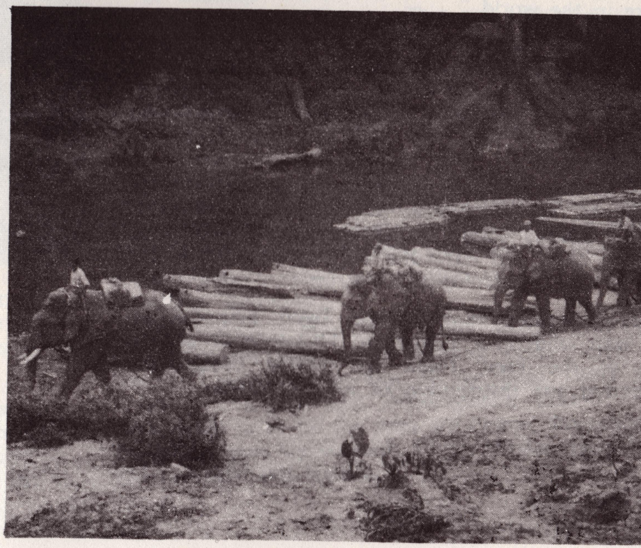


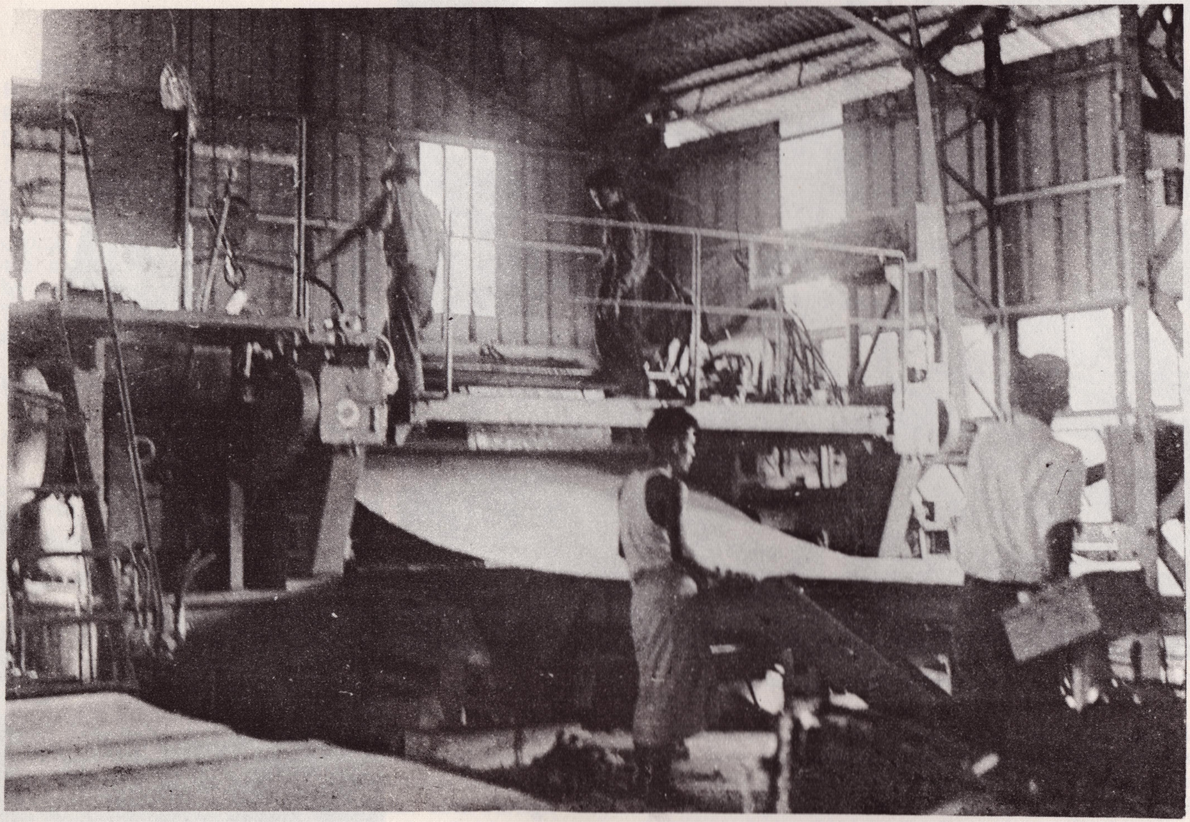
Shwemawdaw Pagoda



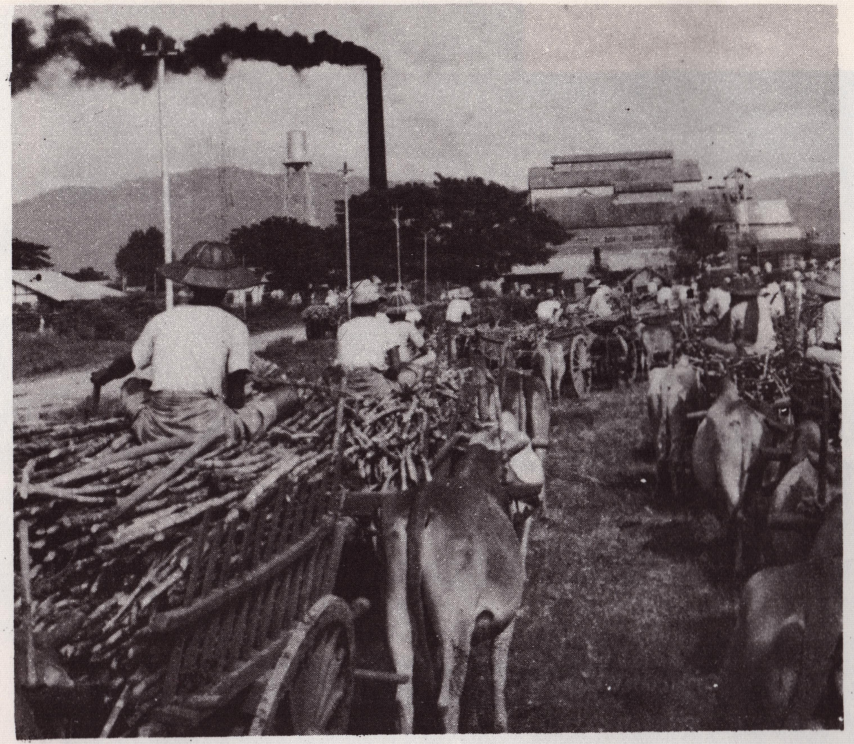
North Nawin Dam

Logs in a forest extraction camp

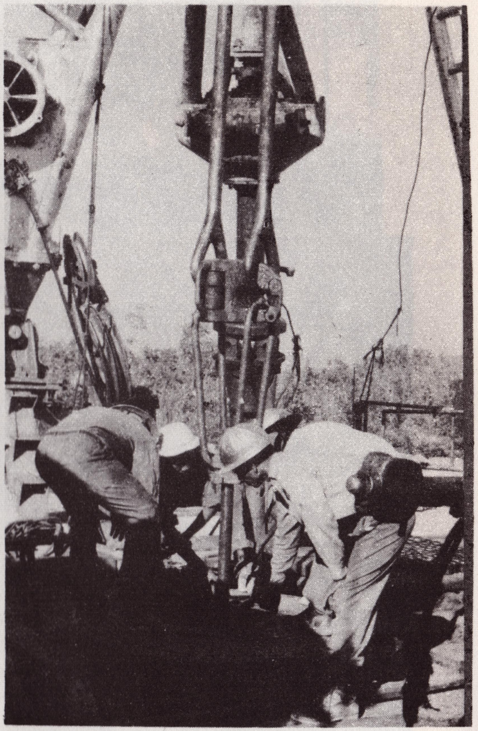




Hswa plywood factory



Zeyawaddy sugar mill at Toungoo



Prospecting oil in Pegu Division

Rangoon Division

Rangoon Division came into being recently. In the pre-war and the immediate postwar years Rangoon was in Pegu Division. In fact, Rangoon Division was carved out of the original Pegu Division. It occupies the eastern part of the Irrawaddy Delta.

It is industrially and commercially the most developed of the states and divisions and also is the capital and the seat of government. It is bounded on the north and east by Pegu Division, on the south by the Gulf of Martaban and on the west by Irrawaddy Division. From north to south Rangoon Division is about 160 km. long, and from east to west about 112 km. at the widest. It has an area of 9912 square kilometres.

There are 39 townships in this Division, eleven townships having been added lately to the 28 townships of the former Greater Rangoon. Greater Rangoon is made up of Rangoon city and its suburbs, the new satellite towns of North Okkalapa, South Okkalapa, and Thaketa, and the townships across the river, namely, Dawbon, Dalla, Seikkyi/Kanaungto and Cocos Island. The eleven townships added to Rangoon Division are Syriam, Kyauktan, Thongwa, Kayan, Twante, Kungyangon, Kawhmu, Hmawbi, Hlegu, Taikkyi and Htantabin.

Rangoon Division has a population of nearly 3,486,400 (1980), most of whom are Burmans, but there are also other indigenous races. Before the war, Rangoon used to have a large number of Indians and Chinese and some Europeans. Rangoon was then a cosmopolitan city and Burma's trade, both foreign and local, was entirely dominated by foreigners. With the coming of World War II most of the foreigners left the country and only some returned at the end of the war. A considerable number of the Chinese and Indians have now become Burmese nationals.

The township with the greatest number of people in this Division is Insein, with over 186,800. Cocos Island has the least: 910 people.

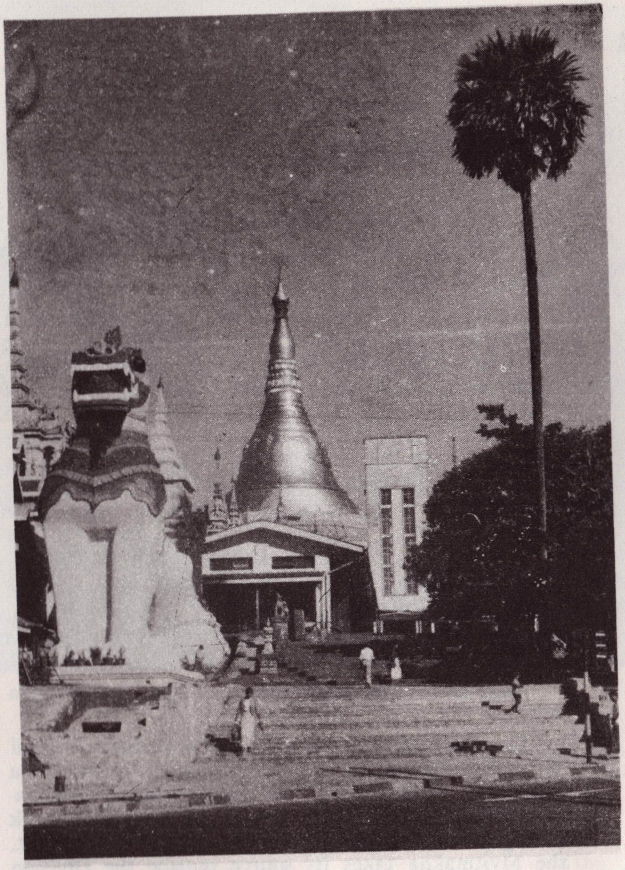
Physical Background

Rangoon Division is the eastern part of the Delta region and has been built up mostly with recent alluvium and other sedimentary rocks especially sandstone. The Pegu Yoma, as it continues southwards, enters this Division reaching as far as Rangoon. It is found here only as a low laterite ridge, and the hill on which the Shwedagon Pagoda stands is regarded as part of this ridge. The continuation of this ridge is found again across the river in Syriam. There are also some spurs of the Pegu Yoma on either side of the Ngamoyeik chaung.

The general landscape within Rangoon and its suburbs is undulating. Names like Myenigon, Shinsawbugon, Gyogon and Mahlwagon indicate areas slightly higher than the rest.

The Shwedagon Pagoda stands on the Theingoktara Hill.

There are three rivers within the Division and all three flow into one main river which enters the sea just south of Rangoon. The first is the Myitmakha-Bawle-Hlaing river, the second is the Ngamoyeik chaung and the third is the Pegu river. In the west, the Myitmakha takes its source outside the Division and when it enters this Division it is known as the



Sacred Shwedagon

Bawle. The Bawle forms the boundary between the Rangoon and the Irrawaddy Divisions for about 24 km. Farther south it is joined by the Panhlaing on its right bank; as it continues southwards, the Bawle joins the Hlaing which is flowing in the same direction in the east, and the river thus formed is known as the Hlaing or the Rangoon river. The Ngamoyeik has its source in the Pegu Yoma and flows southward, to enter the Rangoon river near Monkey Point. The lower part of the Ngamoyeik chaung is called the Pazundaung creek. The Pegu river which rises in the Pegu Yoma, enters the Division from the east and flows into the Rangoon river near Syriam.

Like the rest of the country, the climate of this Division is the tropical monsoon type with well-defined wet and dry seasons. The average rainfall for Rangoon is a little over 260 cm. and the average annual temperature is 27°C. The hottest months are March, April and May with average temperatures of around 29.5°C. This is the period immediately preceding the monsoon. With the outbreak of the monsoon, temperatures begin to drop. The coolest month is January with an average temperature of 25°C. The number of rainy days for Rangoon is about 125 days a year. The climate is hot and wet enough for tropical rain forests but most of these have been cleared to make room for cultivation of rice and other crops.

Economy

Rice is the leading crop and is confined largely to the lowlying land. Rubber needs good drainage and thrive on lateritic soils, so rubber plantations are found in the well-drained, lateritic areas. Market gardening and poultry farming are closely related to the large demand from urban centres and are therefore important in the suburban area near Rangoon. Large amounts of eggs, chicken, ducks and vegetables, etc., have to be brought in to feed Rangoon's population.

Industrially and commercially, Rangoon is the most developed division in the country. There is a large variety of industries *e.g.* those producing foodstuff, textiles and toilet goods. There are metal and engineering works, chemical industries, ceramics, stationery and printing works.

The more important of these industries are the Thamaing Spinning and Weaving Factory, the Jute Mill at Okkyin, the Pharmaceutical Works at Gyogon, the Ywama Steel Mill, the Insein Railway workshop; the Sinmalaik, Dalla and Dawbon dockyards; the car assembly plant under the management of Heavy Industries Corporation on Kaba-Aye Pagoda (former Kokine Road), the brick factories at Hmawbi and Danyingon, toilet goods factory at Thuwunna; rice, flour and oil mills and saw mills. Other works include the match factory, the paint and pesticide factories, the plastic factory, the rubber works, the aluminium and enamel works, and the rope factory. There are also cottage industries such as cheroot-rolling, confectioneries, shoes and slippers.

Rangoon Division is well-connected with road, railway and water communications. It is the terminus of four principal railway lines; the Rangoon-Prome line, the Rangoon-Letpadan line, the Rangoon-Pegu-Martaban line and the Rangoon-Pegu-Mandalay line. It also has a circular railway serving the suburbs. The motor roads follow the principal railway lines. These are the Rangoon-Pegu-Martaban

Sule Pagoda

road, the Rangoon-Pegu-Mandalay road and the Rangoon-Prome-Mandalay road. The last line has a branch from Hmawbi to Htantabin.

Across the river there is a road from Syriam to Kyauktan and another from Syriam to Thongwa and Kayan. From Twante there is a road leading to the opposite bank of Dedaye and passing through Kawhmu and Kungyangon. Another road from Twante leads to Kyaiktaw.

As regards water communications, there are launch services from Rangoon to Seik-kyi, Kanaungto, Dalla, and Syriam. The Rangoon river is connected with the Toe river by the Twante Canal. This Canal is 34 km. long and first came into operation in 1916. This is a very busy canal and links the Rangoon Division with the Irrawaddy Division.

From Rangoon there are coastal services to Moulmein (Mon State) and the ports of Burma and Rangoon Port accounts for 85 per cent of foreign trade and 44 per cent of coastal trade. The port of Rangoon lies on the left bank of the Rangoon river about 34 km. from the sea. The harbour area extends along part of the Rangoon and Pegu rivers and the Pazundaung creek.

Rangoon has air connections with all the major towns such as Mandalay and Moulmein and less accessible towns like Myitkyina, Putao, Kengtung, Akyab, Tavoy and Mergui. Special flights are also arranged for trips to Sandoway (Ngapali) and Pagan. Services are operated by the Burma Airways Corporation and recently, more external flights have been inaugurated. The B.A.C. planes now go to Bangkok, and Singapore in the east and to Kathmandu (Nepal) in the west.

The airport is at Mingaladon. It is serviceable for large international planes, but the length of the present runway is not sufficient for jumbo jets like the Boeing 747. It has now been decided to extend the runway at Mingaladon and to build a new air terminal similar to the existing one.

The City of Rangoon

After the annexation of the country in 1885, the British government shifted the capital from Mandalay to Rangoon, from an interior to a coastal location, in keeping with the changing requirements. From that time onwards Rangoon has remained the capital of Burma. It is now the political centre as well as the economic centre.

Rangoon, originally was a Mon town by the name of Dagon. In 1753 Alaungpaya rebuilt the town and renamed the new town Yangon, meaning, the "end of strife." At that time it was only a small town stretching from the river in the south to what is now known as the Mahabandoola street in the north, and from Sule Pagoda road in the west to what is now known as Theinbyu street in the east.

Most of the town was, however, destroyed during the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824). Then in 1841 King Tharrawaddy ordered that the town be moved to a site at the base of the Shwedagon Pagoda. During the second Anglo-Burmese war (1852), both the new town and the old village on the river bank were destroyed. When war ended, the British had the unique opportunity of planning an entirely new city.

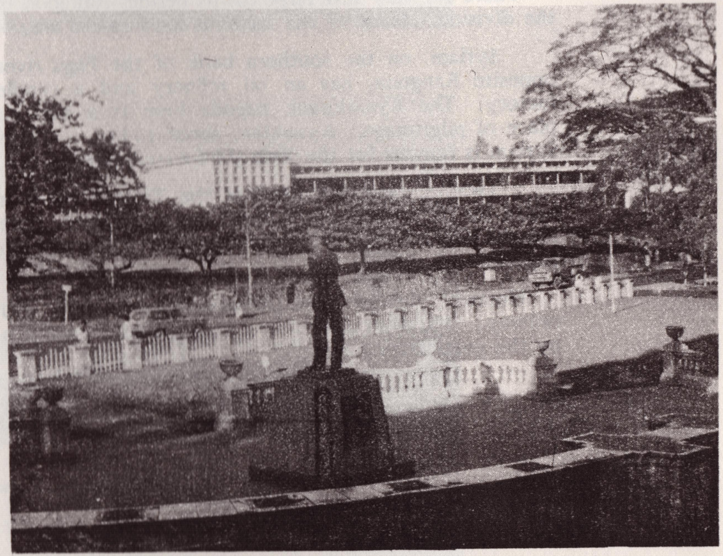
The first plan for the city was made by Dr. William Montgomery who had been stationed in Singapore and had experience in town planning. This plan was modified and with the help of Burmese engineers, a final plan was put up by Lt. A. Fraser, an engineer.

According to this plan, the Sule Pagoda was chosen as the hub of the road system. The city formed a rectangle parallel to the river. About 43 per cent of the central part of the city was devoted to streets and drainage lanes. Originally, the city was designed for a population of 36,000. But Rangoon has outgrown this figure by several times and the town has expanded, particularly towards the north. A decade ago, satellite towns of North and South Okkalapa and Thaketa and recently Thuwunna have been built to accommodate the surplus population.

The business district of the city is in the centre; bazaars, departmental stores, banks, and cinemas are all here. The City Hall, the Independence Monument and Mahabandoola Park are also in the heart of the city. Rangoon also has a zoological garden, and the National Museum. The original Royal Throne (*Thihathana palin*), the Royal Regalia and many other priceless articles of the Burmese Royal family are housed in the National Museum.

There are many important pagodas and shrines in Rangoon and its environs, but the most famous is the Shwedagon Pagoda. The towering Shwedagon Pagoda is the most famous shrine in Burma and, as the largest Buddhist temple of its kind in the world, remains the most venerated place of worship for Buddhists all over the world.

Originally only 8 m. high, the pagoda was raised to a height of 20 m. while as was the royal tradition successive Mon and Burmese kings repaired, enlarged and regilt the pagoda. It was during the reign of famous Queen Shinsawbu (1453—1472) that the Shwedagon first assumed its present appearance, while King Sinbyushin of Ava in 1774 raised the pagoda to its present height of 97.8 m.



Bogyoke Aung San Park.

Another famous pagoda in the city of Rangoon is the Sule Pagoda, which serves to mark the exact centre of the city. The pagoda was built about 2,250 years ago during a Mon dynasty and enshrines Buddha's Relics brought over in ancient times by two Buddhist missionaries from India.

The Kaba Aye Pagoda, dedicated to the cause of world peace, was completed in 1951. It is about 11 km. north of the centre of Rangoon.

There are very few large towns besides Rangoon in the division. Some of the medium sized towns are:—

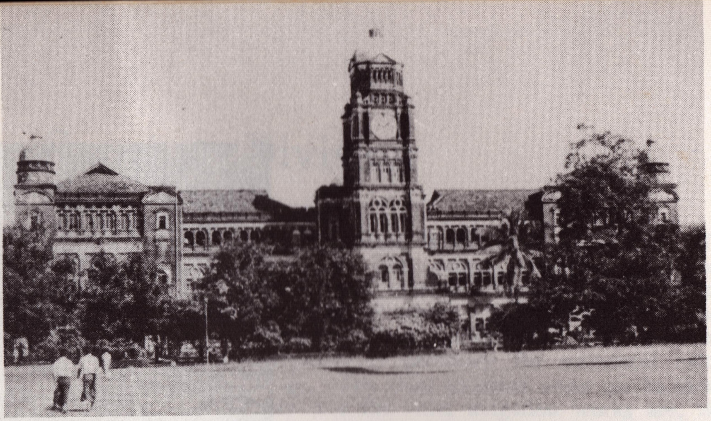
Syriam, on the southern bank of the Pegu river opposite Rangoon, has an oil refinery and a candle factory. The Kyaikkhauk pagoda here is a popular place of pilgrimage. Kyauktan, about 16 km. south of Syriam is famous for the Yele (Mid-water) pagoda.

Twante, near the head of the Twante canal is noted for its earthern pots, fruits and vegetables. The famous pagoda here is the Shwesandaw, a sacred Mon pagoda.

Hmawbi lies on the Rangoon-Prome road and railway. It has an agricultural experimental farm run by the government.

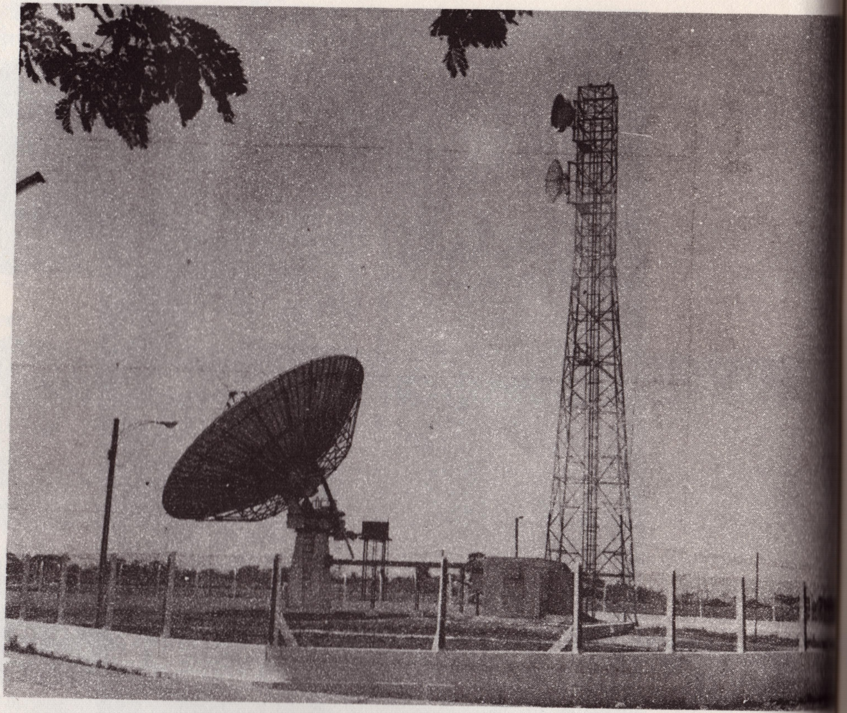
Independence Monument.

Central Law Office



Rangoon Port.

Rangoon Central Station.



Antenna for satellite communication.

Sagaing Division

Sagaing Division is the largest Division in Burma. The southern half lies in the Dry Zone, while the northern half is partly in the western hills and partly in the northern hills region. It is bounded by Kachin State, Shan State, Mandalay Division, Magwe Division, Chin State and India. It has an area of 94625 square, kilometres. There are 38 townships and 1,816 village tracts in this Division. It has a population of 3,564,800 in 1980 and the majority of the people are Burmans.

Physical Background

The northern half of the Division lies partly in the western hills and partly in the northern hills region. Thus, this part of Sagaing Division is generally rugged. Although the southern half lies in the Central Basin, the land here is far from being level because of some low hills, like the Minwun range and the Sagaing hills. The Sagaing hills on the western bank of the Irrawaddy are studded with innumerable pagodas, monasteries and nunneries. The region is drained by the Irrawaddy, the Chindwin and the Mu rivers. The Irrawaddy also forms the boundary between Sagaing and Mandalay Division for about 240 km.

On the whole, the southern and southeastern parts are much drier than the northern and western areas. Sagaing receives an annual rainfall between 75—100 cm. Katha between 150—180 cm. and Mawlaik between 180—200 cm. respectively. In the drier areas rainfall is unreliable and variable. Natural vegetation varies with the amount of rainfall received. The regions having less than 100 cm. are usually covered with scrubs and shrubs, while the wetter regions are covered with forests. Sagaing Division has approximately, 23,310 square kilometres of reserved forests.

Economy

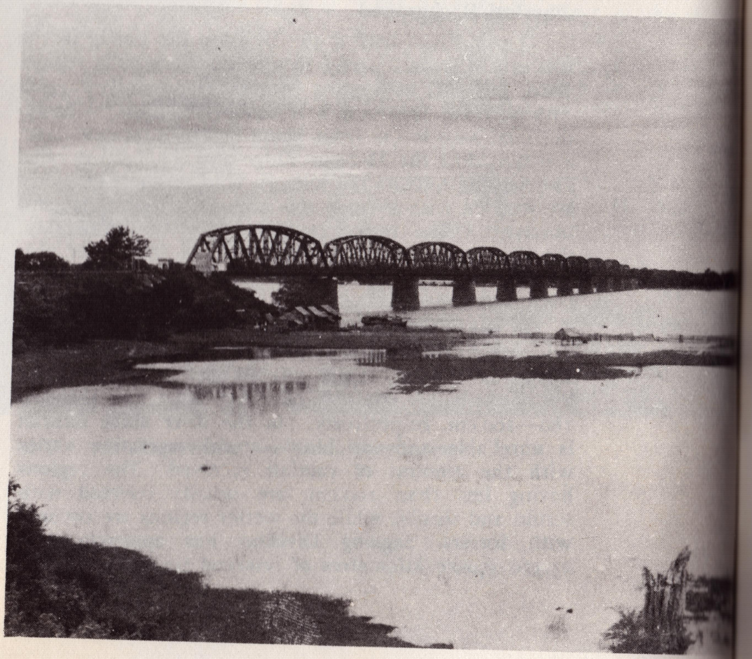
Agriculture is the chief occupation. The leading crops are rice, wheat, sesamum, groundnut, pulses, cotton and tobacco. Sagaing Division is the leading producer of wheat. It accounts for 80 per cent of Burma's wheat production. In the drier regions irrigation is necessary for successful cultivation of crops. The chief irrigated areas are in Shwebo township and the chief irrigation works are, the Shwebo canal, Ye-U canal, Mu canal and the Mahananda reservoir. Plans have also been made for the Mu River Project, which when completed would be able to irrigate one million acres of agricultural land in this division. The islands in the rivers are also used for cultivation of tobacco, pulses, onions and vegetables. The chief arable areas are found among the rolling lands of Sagaing township, and Lower Chindwin areas, the relatively wide plains around Meza and Katha and the Mu valleys.

Forestry is important in the wetter regions, especially in the Chindwin area. Teak and other hardwoods are the leading products. There are also some good grazing where cattle and buffaloes are raised mainly for draught. Fishing is done mostly in lakes and ponds and such lake fisheries are locally known as "in";, the well-known ones being Ye-myet-Kyee, Thazin, Legyi and Kaung-hmu-daw. Salt is also obtained from small saline lakes found in Shwebo township. Making jaggery (palm sugar) from toddy palm juice is widespread throughout the dry areas. Ywataung in Sagaing township is noted for silver works. In Ywathitgyi, there is a government spinning and weaving factory. There are plans to set up a hydroelectric power plant at Hta-man-thi on the

Chindwin river. The minerals of importance in this division are copper and coal. Copper is mined in Kyee-ni, 14.5 km. from the opposite bank of Monywa and coal is mined in Kalewa.

The Irrawaddy and the Chindwin rivers form the chief means of water transportation. The Irrawaddy river is navigable throughout its length in the region, while the Chindwin is navigable up to Homalin, in the dry season and up to Hkamti in the rainy season. There are two important railway lines, the Mandalay-Sagaing-Myitkyina line and the Mandalay-Sagaing-Monywa line. The former branches out to Katha from Naba while the latter after reaching Monywa continues up to Budalin. There is a motor road which runs parallel to the railway line leading from Sagaing to Shwebo and Kin-U. From Shwebo, there is a branch road to Kyaukmyaung (opposite Singu) on the Irrawaddy. One road from Kin-U stretches to the west bank of the Irrawaddy, opposite Thabeik-kyin and the other turns north to Zigon and the west to Taze. The road from Sagaing after passing through Myinmu, Chaung-U, Monywa continues north to Dipeyin, Ye-U, and to Taze where it meets the Shwebo-Khin-U road. From here it continues northwest to the river bank opposite Kalewa, and then west to Kalemyo near the Chin-Sagaing border. Farther north, there is another road network, from Kanbalu to Kawlin, parallel to the railway line. From Kawlin the road continues north to Wuntho, Meza, Indaw and Ban-mauk. One branch of the road from Ban-mauk goes north to Mansi while the other turns southeast to Pinle-bu and then southeast to Kawlin, making a complete circle. From Indaw there is a short road to Naba. Here, the road bifurcates, one leading southeast to Katha on the Irrawaddy and the other north to Mawlu near the Kachin-Sagaing border.

Ava Bridge.



The important towns of the division are Sagaing, Shwebo, Kin-U, Katha, Myinmu, Monywa, Ye-U and Homalin. The headquarters of the division is Sagaing.

Sagaing is an important religious centre. The Sagaing hills which provide the local monks and nuns with a place of peace and tranquility to study Buddhism are visited by people from all over the country. There are also famous pagodas. Kaunghmudaw pagoda situated five miles northwest of Sagaing, was built by King Thalun in 1636 on the model of the Mahaceti Pagoda of Ceylon in commemoration of the re-establishment of Ava. Unlike other pagodas, it is hemispherical in shape and attracts the veneration of the masses. Farther north, is the famous Mingun pagoda built by Bodawpaya in 1790 but was left unfinished when Bodawpaya died in 1819. This massive pagoda, if completed, would have risen to a height of 150 m. The Mingun bronze bell, the largest ringing bell in the world, is 3.6 m. high, has a diameter of 4.9 m. across the flared mouth and weighs 90 tons.

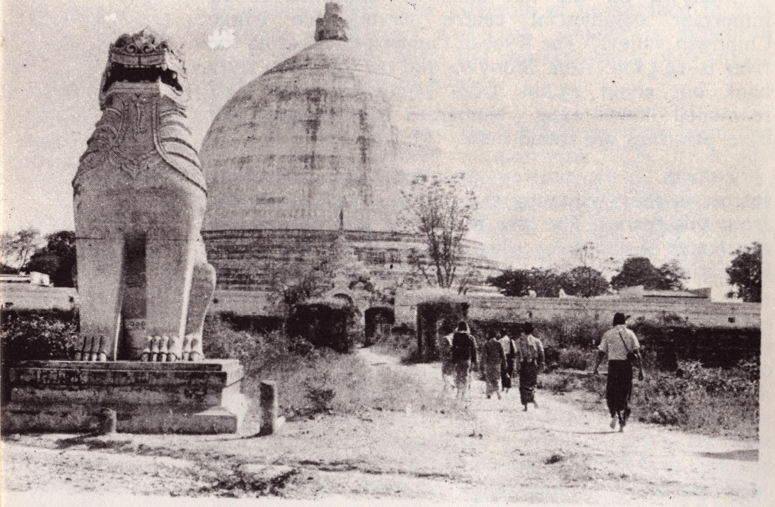
At Ywathitgyi in Sagaing township there is the Academy for Development of National Groups. The only bridge crossing the Irrawaddy is also in Sagaing. It is known as the Ava Bridge or the Sagaing Bridge, and was first opened to traffic in 1938 but was partly destroyed during the second world war. It was fully repaired after the war and opened to traffic on October 29, 1954. The total length of the bridge is 1185 m.

Shwebo was founded by Mokso (hunter) Maung Po and was originally called Mokso-nga-po-ywa. In 1839 King Tharrawaddy changed the name to Shwebo. Shwebo lies in the heart of rich agricultural land and is also a trading centre.

Monywa on the left bank of Chindwin is an important commercial centre serving the whole Chindwin valley. The Kyee-ni copper mines across the river is 14.5 km. from Monywa and on the same river bank but about 19 km. from Monywa is the well renowned Powuntaung. Numerous cave temples and cave paintings are found here.

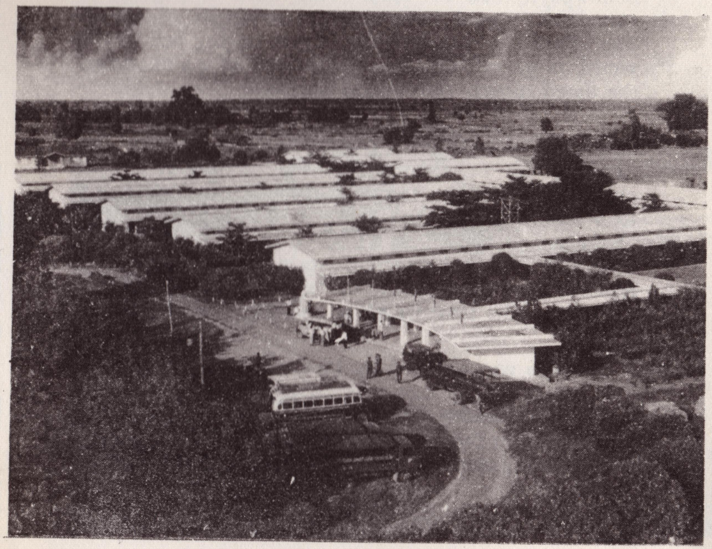
Budalin is a railway terminus. An interesting feature is the Twintaung crater lake which is not far from this town. The lake is circular and the area of the crater is about 6.5 square kilometres. The water level is more than 90 m. below the rim of the crater.

Chindwin River.

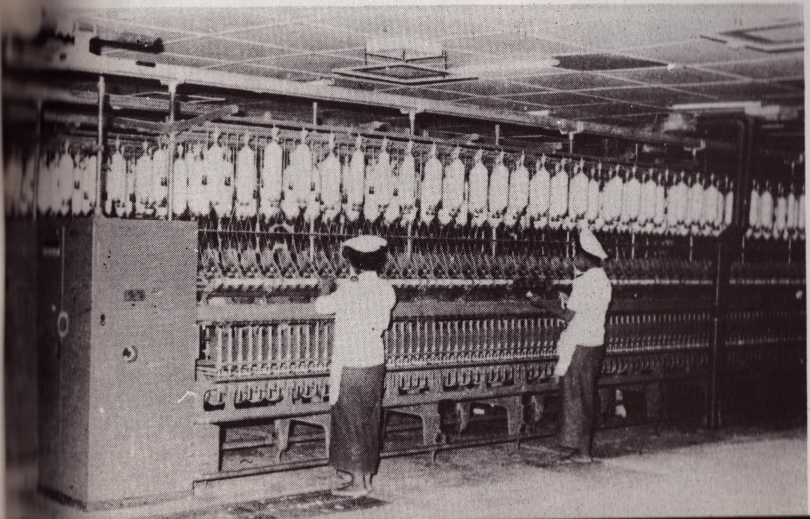


The Academy for the Development of National Groups at Ywathitgyi, Sagaing.

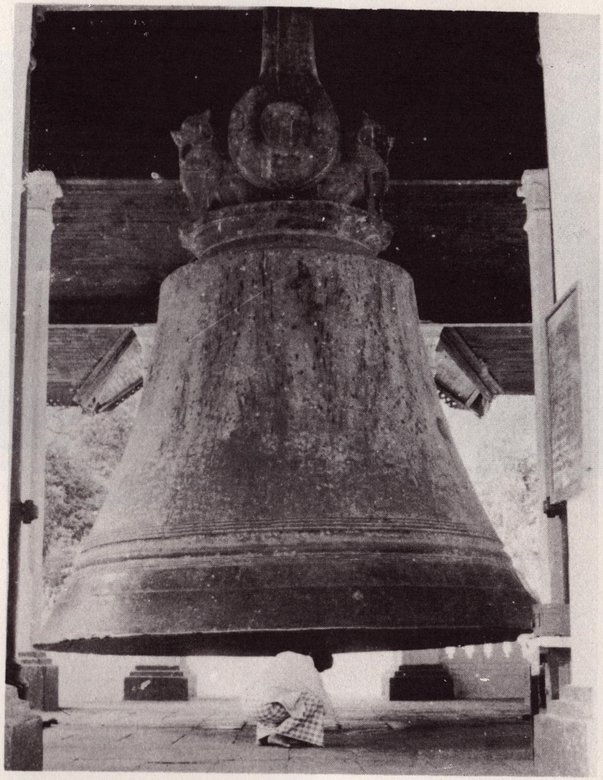
Kaunghmudaw Pagoda at Sagaing.



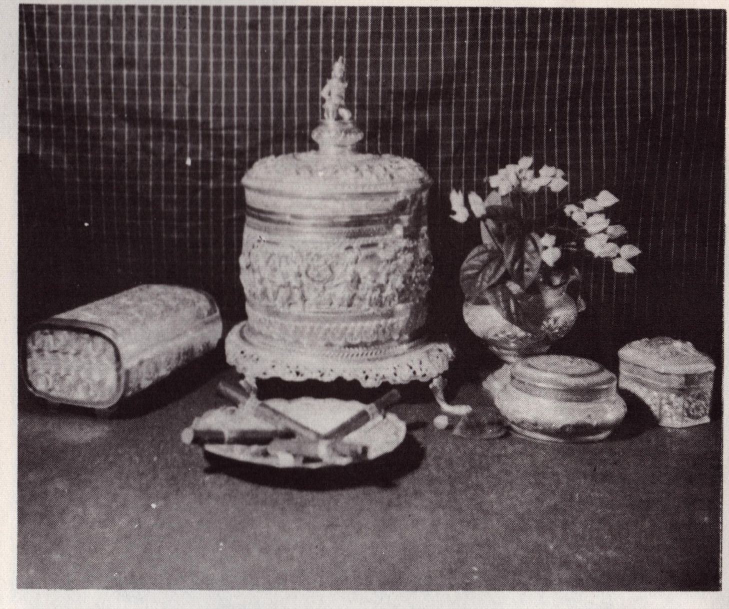
Kalewa coal mine



Ywathitgyi Textile Mill



Mingun Bell



Sagaing silverware

Tenasserim Division

This division is the southernmost division of Burma and is part of the "panhandle" that projects towards the south from the eastern end of the country.

Tenasserim Division has an area of 12,297 square kilometres covering ten townships and 263 village tracts. It has a population of 807,400 in 1980 most of whom are Burmans. The people of Tavoy and Mergui, although they are Burmans, speak the Burmese language with an accent peculiar only to them. There are also the Salones inhabiting the waters of the Mergui archipelago. Their houses, which are built on stilts are located not on land but in the water, along the coast. Salones are expert sea divers and are also known as sea-gypsies of Burma.

Physical Background

Tenasserim is a narrow coastal plain about 576 km. long from north to south and about 96 km. from east to west at its widest. The plain is narrow and is backed up by mountains, which are known by the general name of the Tenasserim Yoma. These are the continuation of the Shan Plateau and are much older in age than mountains in western Burma. The mountains are composed basically of granite and gneisson rocks which are often associated with tin and tungsten.

The Tenasserim Yomas run right down to the southernmost point of the country, Victoria Point, and continue southwards into the Malay Peninsula. In fact, these mountains are part of the Indo-Malayan mountain system which forms the core of the Southeast Asian peninsula. The highest mountain Myin-hmo-let-khat taung rises to a height of 2040 meters. There are some passes through these ranges. The islands along the coast are the upper parts of submerged mountain ranges. From north to south, they are the Heinze group, the Maungmagan group, the Launglon group and the Mergui archipelago. Some of the familiar islands of the Mergui group are the Mali, Letsutaw, Katharine, Owen, Carrie, Lampi, Pale, Zadetgalay and Zadetgyi. The rivers are the Tavoy, the Great Tenasserim, the Little Tenasserim, the Le-nyar and the Pachan.

Tenasserim has a tropical monsoon type of climate, but since it lies only 10 to 15 degrees north of the equator, the dry season here is much shorter and the total annual rainfall is greater than in the rest of the country. Tavoy has an average rainfall of over 508 cm. and about 145 rainy days in a year, compared with 262 cm. and about 125 days in Rangoon. The natural vegetation is tropical rainforest much of which have been cut down in the lowlands to make way for cultivation of crops. The ridges, however are still covered with thick forests.

Economy

Both agriculture and mining are important in the economy of the region. Rice is the chief crop in the coastal plain and river valleys. Other crops include maize, pulses, sugar cane, groundnut, chillies and onions. Between the coastal plain and the hills are general croplands, which have been put under tree crops, such as rubber and oil palm and fruits like durians, mangosteens and rambutans. There are equatorial fruits which are cofined mostly to the Tenasserim Peninsula and are rarely found in other parts of the country. The names of these fruits are all derivations from Malay. The term "durian" derives from Malay "duri" meaning thorn, "mangosteen" and "rambutan" from "rambut" meaning hair. Other fruits like mangoes and jackfruit are also grown. Coconut flourishes along the coast and "dhani" in freshwater swamps. Orchards occupy as much as 15 per cent to 20 per cent in this division as against 5 per cent to 8 per cent in the Mon State or even less in many other regions within the country.

Rubber (*Hevea brazillansis*) has a special place in the economy of the region. Rubber was first introduced into Burma in 1876. In that year, the first rubber plants arrived at the port of Mergui. Since then, Tenasserim has been the largest producer of rubber in the whole country. Tenasserim has a climate which closely resembles the equatorial; its soils are also lateritic. These two conditions favour the cultivation of rubber. However, a large proportion of the present trees have become old and are now being replaced gradually with young trees of better quality. Rubber needs a good drainage, so, most of the plantations are located along the foothills rather than in lowlying areas. Most of the plantations are in Mergui, Tavoy, Yebyu and Thayetchaung. Government has set up a rubber nursery at Hnangyeywa in Yebyu Township and another at Mergui (East Mergui nursery).

Recently, cultivation of oil palm (*Elaeis guinunsis*) was introduced in this region. The climate here is very favourable as it is hot and wet almost throughout the year. Oil palm as the name indicates is a good producer of oil. Oil from this palm is currently used in Burma as raw material in the manufacture of soap and other industries.

Fishing is another important activity in this coastal region. Both inland and coastal fishing are done on a commercial scale. Fresh fish and fish products like fish sauce, fish paste, dried fish and dried prawns are supplied to Rangoon and Moulmein markets.

Government has also introduced the culture of pearls in some of the islands of Mergui Archipelago, and it has proved to be successful. Pearls are sold by auction at the gem emporium held yearly in Rangoon, together with other precious stones of Burma.

Another interesting activity here is the collection of edible birds' nests, which are believed to have medicinal properties and are highly valued abroad. These birds' nests are built on steep walls of rock caves and mountains on the numerous islands found along the coast and the collection involves a great deal of risk, time and labour.

Mining plays an important role in the economy of the region. The two most important minerals here are tin and tungsten and 67 per cent of the tin and tungsten produced in the country comes from this division. The leading mines are Heinda, Harmyingyi, Kanbauk, Yawa, Kyauknitaung, Nanthida and Yatanabon. The Heinda and Harmyingyi mines are now being rehabilitated and modernized for works covering both exploration and production. Other industries besides mining are rice milling, saw milling and preliminary processing of rubber.

Tenasserim Division has no rail communication and there are only few roads. These roads are confined mostly to the narrow coastal plain and they run from north to south parallel to the coast and the mountains. In the north, the road from Ye in Mon State continues southwards to Tavoy and on to Mergui. This road passes through Yebyu, Thayetchaung, Pyinbyugyi, Palauk, Palaw and Mayanbinchaung. North of Yebyu, the road branches north-westwards to Kanbauk. From Tavoy the road branches out in three directions. One branch leads to Maungmagan, a second to Launglon and Thakyettaw and a third to Harmyingyi, Myitla and Wazunchaung. East of Myitla and Shinbyutaung there are jungle tracks leading into Thailand.

At this stage something should be said about the new Kamyawkin bridge. This bridge connecting Tavoy with Maungmagan was completed in 1975. The bridge was built near the old outpost of Kamyaw. The bridge is 330 m. in length with eleven spans, and is the longest pre-stressed concrete bridge in Burma. By building this bridge, steamers can berth at Maungmagan instead of Tavoy and passengers can travel overland across the bridge. Goods can also be carried in the same way. There is now no need for steamers to go round Shin Maw peninsula to Tavoy and the Rangoon-Tavoy sea route is thus shortened by 152 km.

The coastal transportation is important as most towns and villages are located along the coast. However rivers become more important, travelling towards the interior. The Great Tenasserim river is navigable throughout the year for about 72 km. above Mergui up to the town of Tenasserim. In the rainy season launches and motor boats can go up to Tagu, an additional distance of 32 km.

Both Tavoy and Mergui have air links with Rangoon.

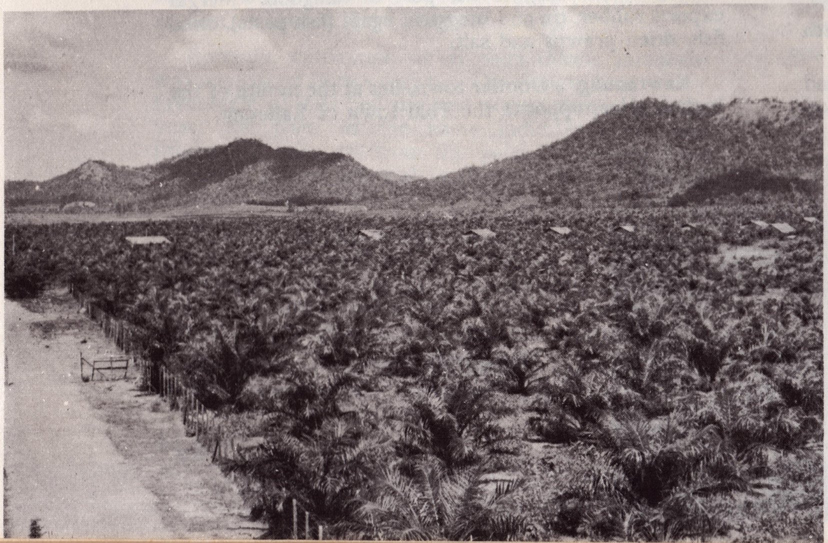
All the important towns of this Division are found on the coast. Tavoy the headquarters of the division is a secondary seaport and lies on the eastern bank of the Tavoy river. Tavoy exports tin and tungsten, rice and rice products, rubber, timber, charcoal and dried betel (areca) nuts. It imports machinery parts, sugar, textiles, cooking oil, petroleum and lubricants. It has rice mills and saw mills.

Maungmagan beach is near Tavoy. Now that the Kamyawkin bridge has been completed this beach is in direct link with Tavoy and Ye and other towns farther north.

Mergui lies on a tidal cut-off, connecting the mouths of the Great Tenasserim and the Kyaukpya rivers. The northern entrance to the channel is accessible to sea-borne traffic while the southern entrance serves the Great Tenasserim river. Like Tavoy, it is a secondary port and handles very little foreign trade. However, it has an important role in the country's coastal trade and is second only to the port of Rangoon. Mergui exports rubber, tin and tungsten, ngapi (fish paste), dried fish, dried prawns and salt.

Kawthaung, a frontier town, lies at the mouth of the Pachan river, opposite the Thai town of Ranaung.

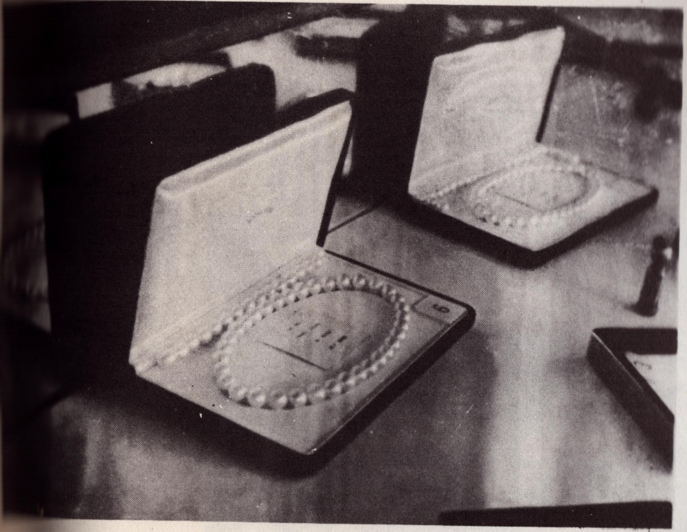
Maungmagan beach



Heinda mine (top left)

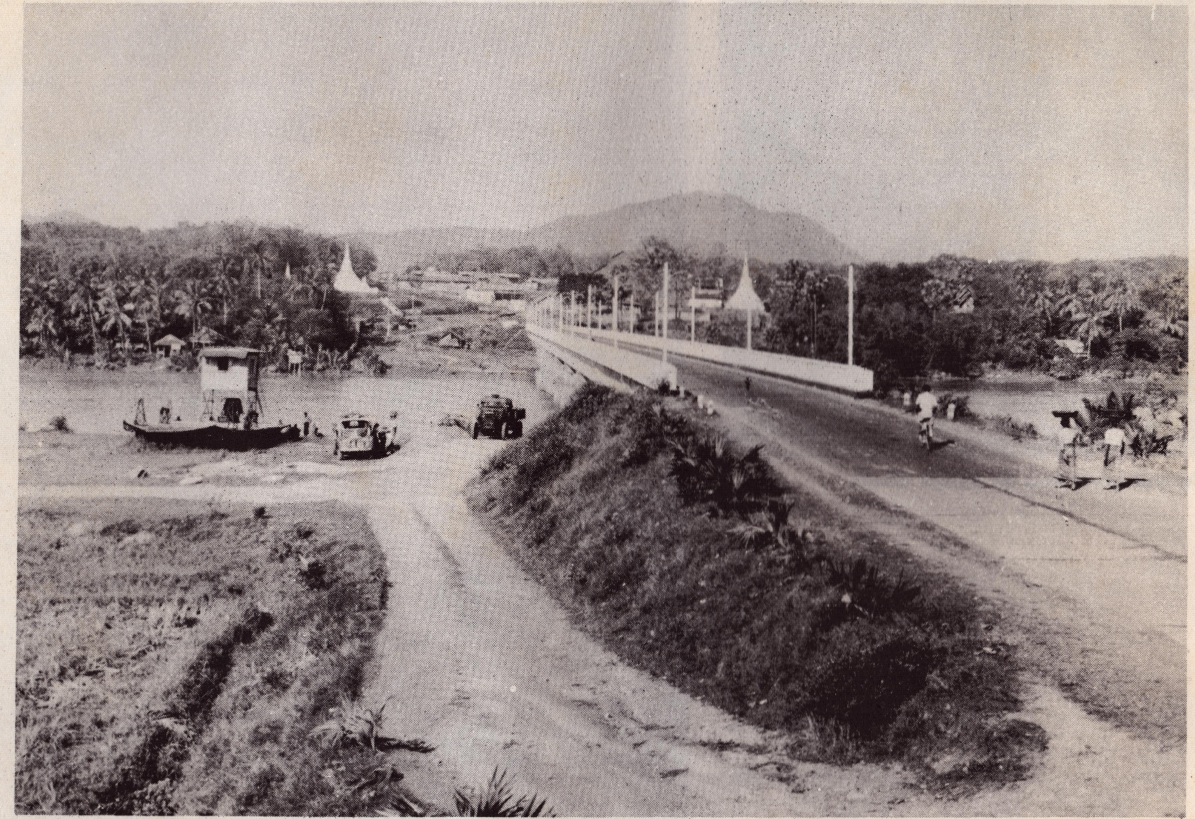
A rubber plantation (top right)

Oil-plam plantation (bottom)



Cultured pearls from the Mergui Islands.

Fishing off the Tenasserim coast



Kamyawkin Bridge

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